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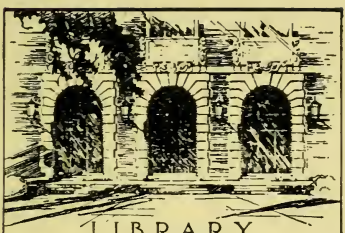

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AMATORY TALES

OF

SPAIN, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND,

AND THE

MEDITERRANEAN:

CONTAINING

THE FAIR ANDALUSIAN; ROSOLIA OF PALERMO

AND

THE MALTESE PORTRAIT:

INTERSPERSED WITH PIECES OF ORIGINAL POETRY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By HONORIA SCOTT,

AUTHOR OF THE WINTER IN EDINBURGH, &c.

" Oh ! how this spring of Love resembleth
" Th' uncertain glory of an April day;
" Which now shews all the beauty of the sun,
" And by and by a cloud takes all away."

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY J. DICK, 55, CHISWELL STREET;

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AMATORY TALES.

ROSOLIA OF PALERMO.

CHAPTER V.

" Those sculptur'd halls my feet shall never tread,
" Where varnish'd vice and vanity combin'd,
" To dazzle and seduce, their banners spread;
" And all the flowers of spurious fancy blow,
" And Title his ill-woven chaplet wears.

" NEVER," cried Lorenzo to Carlotta, " never will I enter the Verdura palace again, but as its possessor:---the choice of the enthusiastic Rosolia has

robbed my youth of its charm; and woman and love henceforth are strangers to it; but for my mother's fame will I yet exert what for myself were worthless."

"Remain with me awhile," urged Carlotta; "plans formed during the agitation of the mind cannot be productive of good. The Duke, Rosolia, and the Countess, have left Palermo for the castle in the Valde Noti. It is there, doubtless the solemnization of the duke's nuptials with Olivia will take place."

"Is it not rather Rosolia's assumption of the veil they meditate?" enquired Lorenzo.

"Doubtless both will soon take place," replied the count; "but neither are of avail to you. Your mother's letters, and their corresponding documents, lodged in my chamber, secure you from

the first: the latter, my son," cried Carlotta, tenderly, "religion and reason call on you forcibly to conquer."

Carlotta drew Lorenzo to the society of his family; their intercourse always stilled his emotions. Their discourses and studies were those of taste; but round the ancient bard or historian their praises threw no wreaths, when sensuality wove the verse, or error dwelt on the records of depravity. The busts of virtuous men adorned the chaste architecture of their abode: their actions were the ground of discourse, and the lessons of their children; who in hushed silence placed the finger of mute attention on their rosy lips as Carlotta opened the page of history, or the modest Julia gave music to verse as unsullied as her thoughts.

It was now Lorenzo reproached himself. In the wish of exciting a passion

he fondly hoped to guide, he, in the hours his fair cousin permitted his instruction, had turned the direction of her eyes to seductive volumes; and forgetting the thorn of their wreath, bade her

> " With exil'd Ovid drop a tear,
> " And with Tibullus melt in love."

What, if their dreams should arise on the gloom of her future life?---He turned from the reflection with horror.

Carlotta advised Lorenzo to reside in Naples, where, on the denial of Julian, he could lay his proofs of succession at the foot of the throne; and in intervening years enjoy the society of the lovers and professors of the arts, at a distance from the countess and her associates. The youth listened; and shortly after embarked on board a speronare for Italy.

It was the close of a delightful evening, as the family of Carlotta accompanied to the shore the youth whose manners and story had secured him their friendship, and in whose future feelings they warmly assured him they would ever participate. " Farewell, regretted and beloved friends!" cried Lorenzo; " pray that my life may conclude without the misfortune of crimes; but seek not to invoke happiness. My bosom is withered, and even your tears cannot restore it."

" Behold," said Carlotta, pointing to the beach, " the sand of the shores produce plants:---this dream of fancy past, I foretell the flowers of a rich autumn."

Julia sighed! Lorenzo lingered over her hand, as he kissed it respectfully. " How shall I thank you!" said he impressively: " you have condescended to soothe the follies you never knew; to

listen to all the visions of my passion; and to drop a tear for my Rosolia.---Happy, ever happy be your hours!---may no prayer of yours ascend unheard, no wish remain ungratified!"

"And you, happy mother!" ejaculated he, as the countess reeeived his adieus; "may your tears never descend on a tomb, no blossom of yours fall to enrich the earth!---At the close of life may every individual of this dear and respected family ascend together to heaven!"

The Sicilian boatmen began their evening hymn, as they rowed along the shores, over whose bold promontories the moon cast her silver rays, Gliding along Cape Cifala, they swiftly advanced to that of Orlando, and stood off from the coast. Roused by the remarks of the sailors, Lorenzo rose from his recumbent posture on the deck; and

with strained gaze piercing the haze of morning, bade Sicily mentally farewell.

Carlotta judged well in pointing out Naples to Lorenzo. As a passionate admirer of the arts, his eye was never satiated with the riches of antiquity, or the softer display of modern days. Wandering over classic paths, or contemplating in the museum the most precious remains of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabia; reciprocal tastes introduced him to many amateurs, in whose society his more enervating feelings partly lost their ascendancy.

A letter from the count, full of maxims, whose rigour were covered by the flowers of elocution, and the tenderness of the writer, soon reached Lorenzo. The words, "Rosolia is a nun!" were intended to chill the fires of her lover; nor were the efforts of the count unavailing: the youth turned his attention

to the sciences, before whose approach the loves receded.

Di Rossi received considerable marks of attention in Naples. Carlotta had given him introductory letters to some prelates of rank, whose esteem secured him easy access to the houses of the nobility; and as the carnival approached, his circle of friends enlarging, and the lassitude of his mind abated by the cheerful manners of the Neapolitans, the salubrious air he breathed, and the occupations he had been engaged in, he yielded to the solicitations of one of his intimates, the Chevalier Fazello; and accompanied him through the fantastic and changing scenes of the festival. Extending through the crowded streets of Naples, along its shores, and rolling a tide of joy through the neighbouring towns, and along the coast, the moving multitude, in masqued disguise,

or avowed pomp, mingled the equipages of greatness with the humble pedestrian. Fazello and Di Rossi habited as pilgrims, stopt at intervals to survey such of the groupes as seemed most animated; but the wit of the characters they surrounded justified not the admiration they expressed. A *Fisherman*, with grave looks and affected earnestness, wading through the thickly strewn *comfitures*, in search of *Cannolicchi*, called forth bursts of applause. A vender of *Diabolonis*, and an *Impovisatori* rivalled him; and the friends were happy to escape from their impertinent and noisy sallies, to where a company of *Abruzzese* were performing some Sicilian airs on the shepherd's pipe.

Lorenzo, struck with the singularity of a masque following, in every track, the devious path Fazello and himself pursued, when the figure joined

the groupe assembled round the itinerant musicians, turned towards him, and presented his collection of rosaries and *Agnus Deis* for sale.

The stranger, taking up one of the latter, enquired if it had touched the shrine of St. Rosolia.

The words, though such as might have been spoken by any Sicilian accidentally witnessing the carnival, confused Lorenzo: he fancied the voice familiar to him, and would have interrogated him; but Fazello, anxious to serenade a lady whose friend he conjectured would have mixed in the scenes of Naples, hurried him to the suburbs, where placing themselves in front of a balcony, and taking mandolins from under their cloaks, after a flourishing symphony, Fazello, accompanied by his friend's instrument, sung some verses of Italian softness in praise of "the divine inhabitant."

A merry looking old man shortly made his appearance; and thanking Fazello for the praises he had so abundantly bestowed on him, invited him in. The astonished youth complied; and on a minute survey of the object of his devotion, could not withstand the inclination he felt to join Lorenzo, who, unable to conceal his risibility at the adventure, indulged it very freely.

Lorimello, no ways offended, after declaring himself the sole inhabitant of the house, and of course entitled to all the flattery of the serenade, invited them to partake of his maccaroni and fruit, with a bottle of Tuscan wine.

" I am convinced," said Fazello, " I have seen a woman at this balcony; nay, a fair one."

" My neighbour, probably," said the old man; " but, your gallantry would have been as fruitless there.---Vola, is a

handsome girl; but, as she has married my son, I advise you to wish them happiness, and content yourself with my *agremens*.---Here comes Orio!" cried the old man, as Lorenzo, startling at the name, turned, and recognized his young attendant. The page, on his part received him affectionately; and Fazello, anxious to repair the error the casual sight of a beauty had caused, conversed apart with the old man, who was, as he said, "the merriest of Neapolitans;" giving an opportunity to Di Rossi to question the page respecting the family in which he had left him.

"Signor," said Orio, "my little Vola and myself accompanied the duke to his castle in the Valde Noti, where, in a few weeks, the countess married my lord. There was little rejoicing; for Venoni was sent to watch your motions, and those of the count, and the families

round refused the invitations sent them to the marriage."

"What of the Lady Rosolia?" interrogated Lorenzo.

"Alas, Signor!" replied Orio, "she left the castle for the monastery of St. Martino, three weeks before the marriage of the duke. Vola, who loved her lady, wept bitterly as she parted with her, and left her to the nuns, who are as cunning as Barrabas, Signor, till the girls are professed. The duke, who believed the meetings of the Lady Rosolia and yourself were owing to us, shortly dismissed Vola and myself.---We have returned to Naples, and are married."

"May you be happy, Orio!" said Lorenzo; "but tell me, did you follow me this evening through the crowd assembled on the Villa Reale?"

"It was, undoubtedly, Venoni," replied Orio, after a pause; "I have seen

him in Naples, and have reason to believe he watches your motions.---I hear Vola," said he, listening to a step in the next room; " will you, Signor, favour her with a visit."

Lorenzo, following him into a neat room, congratulated the lively damsel on her marriage; and sitting down by her, again spoke of Rosolia. The poor girl, at the mention of her mistress, forgot her own happier fate, and wept bitterly at the recollection of one whose sweetness of manner had won her regards.

" Ah, Signor," cried Vola, " had not the countess been in existence, perhaps you and the Lady Rosolia might have been united, and Orio and myself lived with you in dear Sicily!"

" You must love Naples for my sake," said Orio, pressing her tenderly towards him.

"Naples is very well," said Vola, with an air of conceit; "but would you believe, the people here have the vanity to compare their Vesuvius to our Etna! Ah!" said she, recollecting herself, "Signor is, too, an Italian."

"I love Sicily, however, Vola," replied Lorenzo, sighing as he spoke: "but tell me, before I leave you, did your lady look happy when you parted from her;---was she satisfied with her destiny?"

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Vola, "she looked miserable, Signor; and it was but the evening before last, I heard Nicol, the duke's gardener, who is here collecting rare plants for the palace, say, he had heard they were about to change her convent, as the air of St. Martino affected her health."

Lorenzo's cheek faded to an ashy whiteness. --Rosolia ill and wretched,

was intelligence that reached his heart! Leaving Fazello to spend the night amid the festivities of the carnival, he returned to his apartment; and, musing on news so afflicting, determined to visit Sicily in disguise. His resolution fixed, he gave out on the morrow, his intention of proceeding to Rome for a residence of some months; and cautiously avoiding the possibility of Carlotta's knowledge of his intention, took leave of Naples.

CHAPTER VI.

" Black melancholy sits, and round her throws
" A death-like silence, and a dread repose."

The convent of St. Martino, finding the Duke of Verdura had no intention of enriching the community at the time he added his daughter to their house, objected to her receiving the veil, till a point of so much importance was decided; and urged by the countess, the duke bestowed many presents on their church previous to her profession, which quickly followed, Rosolia having petitioned the archbishop that her probation might be dispensed with. The pomp of the ceremonies attending her assumption of the veil; the enthusiastic fervor

to which her feelings had been wrought; and the affectionate welcome of the sisters, awhile kept her spirits from sinking: but shortly the visions of magnificence flitted away; the nuns, with cold and averted looks, left her to the silence of her cell; and the contemplation of an object of horror, inscribed '*Commune mori*:' the melancholy glimmering of an iron lamp cast a light just enabling her to discern an abode, from whence the deep-toned bell called her, through the damps of vaulted passages, to midnight prayer. Rosolia, used to the smiles of nature, in verdant bowers, looked in vain for the blended sweets of every season. Situated in a declivity of Etna, in the Val Demone, and in the neighbourhood of Catania, the convent of St. Martino, surrounded with lava, from whose black ashes only rose the melancholy chesnut or funereal cypress,

spread no bowers, exhaled no sweets. Etna, partly hid by clouds, threw up spiral volumes of flame, giving light to the nightly procession of monks, who with tapers ascended the mountain, seeking by prayers to avert its destructive fury.

Rosolia, dissatisfied with her abode, sought to alleviate the dejection of her spirits, by intercourse with the sisters; but she was now to learn, the petty jealousies, the suspicion, and the selfishness of society, were inmates of a cloister, even in a greater degree than the world displays. In vain she looked around for some eye that would kindly beam on hers; some hand she could grasp in friendship, some bosom on which repose in sickness and in grief:---forbidding sternness shone in each eye; rigid coldness locked every bosom, and the closed hand rejected hers. "Lo-

renzo!" exclaimed she, in the visions of the night, "again let me hear your voice---again warn me from a monastery!---It is too late!" would she exclaim, as starting from her feverish couch, the quick steps echoing hollowly through the passages, warned her to prayer; "Lorenzo's voice can never pierce these solitudes!---Scenes of my youth, bloom more bright!---delicious Bagaria, strew all your sweets beneath his steps!---Oh, may he never guess Rosolia's sorrow!"

A year, on leaden wings, passed over the wretched girl. The delicacy of her frame, exposed to midnight damps; the struggles of her mind, and the unavailing regret that pursued her even to the altar, brought on a rapid decay. Sullenly the nuns beheld her fade; and even discoursed of her funeral as an event that would break on the monotony

of their life. With tears Rosolia besought her confessor to intercede with the abbot of St. Martino to remove her.

After two months suspence, the worthy ecclesiastic informed her he had obtained permission for her to accompany an aged nun to the baths near Syracuse; and that he doubted not ultimately to accomplish her admission to the convent of St. Agatha, at that city.

With emotions that nearly shattered her fragile frame, the changed Roso ia left St. Martino. The nun who accompanied her had lost her sight; and hoped to recover at the healing spring an infirmity that might have reasonably been ascribed to advanced age. She was garrulous and inquisitive; and continually qusstioned the driver of the carriage and Rosolia on every passing object.

The latter, transported as she left the

dismal precincts of St. Martino for the fruitful Valdi Noti, hailed all in the language of affection. " I see," said she, " the latest bloom linger to greet the early roses; and yonder, beneath the spreading trees, a shepherd boy reposes with his fleecy charge:---further up the woody steeps the torrent falls, with beautiful effect. We are now entering a wood of flowering shrubs; the myrtle, arbutus, and laurestinus, Elizabeth."

" Are there any gay cavaliers on the road?" enquired the aged Elizabeth.

" None," cried Rosolia, surprised; " and were there any, our habits and sickly appearance would excite no observation."

" I wish, Rosolia," said Elizabeth, " some of my gay dresses, with which I was wont to charm the nobles of Reggio, remained; we might be habited like princesses."

" Do not talk of rank," cried Rosolia, offended at the levity of her companion; " I once, Elizabeth, bore a distinguished one; yet I gladly welcome our abode.---Carlo points it out to me; it is a cottage in view of the ocean, over its roof some palm trees extend their beautiful branches."

The cottagers apprised by some monks of Syracuse of their visitors, came out to receive them, and bending to their sacred habits, kissed the edge of their veils respectfully. The age, infirmity, and vanity of Elizabeth, soon employed every individual of the simple family in her service; and Rosolia gently stealing to the door, seated herself, and contemplated the face of nature.---The sun, just sinking in the ocean, illumined it with long lines of sparkling light, over which the airy Grecian vessel, the felucca and the speronare glided. The peasant's

abode, situated in a valley, surrounded by gentle acclivities jutting into the sea, was encompassed by shrubs of *il pomo d'oro*, orange trees, and poplars; the sod beneath, verdant from the late rains, gave birth to spontaneous flowers. Rosolia plucked the honey suckle, tarrier through winter, and the Prestan rose, whose leaves are scattered on classic verse. The fair nun, remembering the anger of the nuns of St. Martino on her rearing a carnation to adorn her cell, regarded the bouquet as the signal of emancipation, and placed it in her bosom. Two little boys, who had been amusing themselves in watching the harmless lizard glide up the mulberry trees, approached her, and encouraged by the mildness of her countenance, took her gently by the hand, and led her to the cradle of their infant sister;---Rosolia's eyes filled with tears, as taking

it in her arms, she kissed and impressed it with the cross of her rosary. The mother, affected at her manner, ever after essayed to prevent her wishes; and Rosolia, recovered in her peaceful abode somewhat of resigned tranquillity.

The *religieuse* of Syracuse frequently visited the nuns, and endeavoured by every means in their power to aid the object of their journey. The blind Elizabeth, leaning on the arm of Rosolia, sought every day the fountain of Arethusa, and seated amid the beauty of its scenes, listened as her companion described them. Accustomed to the homage of strangers, the nuns wandered without fear amid the antiquities of the suburbs, and frequently visited the remains of a Roman theatre, hewn in the rock, whose marble steps, half hid by ivy and plants of richest scent, winds up the rock, over which, in broken torrents,

the waters of a reservoir dash down the precipice.---Seated here, Rosolia delighted to gaze on the beauty of a prospect, over which the bay, the island of Ortygia, and rich plains, through whose enamelled banks the Anaspus wound, scattered their varieties.

One morning, Elizabeth not choosing to accompany her, the fair nun walked abroad, and reposing herself under the shade of the ruin, turned her eyes involuntarily to a prospect so replete with beauty; returning, their regards were suddenly arrested by the appearance of a man, habited as a Greek sailor; who, half hid by the shrubs, seemed attively to survey her. Surprised, and somewhat alarmed, Rosolia rose, and would have left the spot, but felt rooted to the marble, as a voice, on whose last accents memory had dwelt till reason

threatened to forsake its abode, enquired why she feared him?

"O! Rosolia!" cried Lorenzo, as he gazed on her in sorrow, "you are changed; your bloom is fled!---wherefore are you thus, beloved of my heart?---When I left you, Rosolia, but one comfort visited my bosom; I believed you happy: yet of this sole enjoyment your appearance bereaves me.---My sister," cried he, respectfully kneeling, as she waved him from her, "I seek but your peace!"

"It is gone, Lorenzo!" exclaimed she, wildly; "surely I am reserved for some unknown, some awful termination of my misfortunes; else why do I see you here;---why has fate hurried me to the spot?"

"Have confidence in me,---in yourself!" cried Lorenzo: "I swear by the saints, to whom you appertain, that I regard you as sacred!---Oh, God! I can-

not look on you, Rosolia! you have destroyed us both!"

"Steps approach!" exclaimed the agitated nun; "begone, Lorenzo!"

Trembling for her fame, he hastily retired; and, concealed among the foliage, gently followed, as, perceiving her fear to be groundless, Rosolia bent her steps towards home.---Unperceived, he viewed her retreat, and the eager groupe that hailed her return.

Lorenzo now admitted the reasonings of passion in opposition to all that Carlotta taught, all that he himself had once respected:---he was Rosolia's lover; no longer her friend;---and losing all sense of honour in the contemplation of her changed form, and the conviction, that for him she thus faded, resolved to draw her from the altar.

Days he hovered round the cottage,

to seek an interview Rosolia seemed to shun.---At a distance he beheld her amid scenes of pastoral beauty, surrounded by the children of the peasant, or leading her companion, whose situation he quickly perceived, to the springs.

In the neighbourhood of Syracuse Theocritus opened his infant eyes to pastoral scenes, whose enchantments spreading their flowers over his verse, have immortalized the poet and the land. The invocation of Virgil to Aretheusa, was remembered by Lorenzo, as bending over the beautiful fountain, he would have invoked the muse for Rosolia; but love had stolen the implements of art---the fires of composition---and substituted poisoned arrows and unhallowed flame!

Lorenzo had hired a speronare and six rowers, who coasting along the picturesque shores from Catania to Cape

Passaro, awaited his orders; and to whom he appeared to have no object but the wish of sketching views of the country. His dress excited no suspicion; it was calculated for the climate, and to repress the idle curiosity, which might retard his pursuits.

Lenato's cottage, his simple and kind family, whose manners had given pleasure to Rosolia, now ceased to please.---For a time she avoided Lorenzo; but, at length, unable to repress her affection, submitted to the intreaty of his looks, and suffered him to follow her, when with Elizabeth she sought retired groves, and reclining beneath the brightening pomegranate, listened to the nightingale, here a bird of day.

The Sicilians and Italians are remarkable for the expression and grace of their gestures, when in silence they would communicate to an object be-

loved the homage of affection.---Rosolia and Lorenzo thus discoursed, while Elizabeth, unconscious of the presence of a stranger, prattled of her convent, and added her discontents to the fatal resolutions of the lovers.

Round these woods of foliaged beauty nets were extended to ensnare wood-pigeons.---Lorenzo pointed to the nun their imprisoned state; and bringing the captives to her caresses, set them at liberty:---their eyes pursued the joyous flight of the released birds;---sometimes lovers would appear to meet, and spreading together their waving pinions, waft their flight from scenes of danger.

It was not till she was recalled to St. Martino, that Rosolia could determine to abandon the paths she had herself chosen, the altars before whom she presented herself a willing sacrifice. The abbot exerted himself, at the re

quest of her confessor, to obtain her removal to the convent of St. Agatha, but unsuccessfully. The abbess of St. Martino had refused her consent; and learning, though the case of Elizabeth was hopeless, that Rosolia's cheek regained its rose, envied her the world, and called her from it.

Lorenzo learned the intelligence from Elizabeth's murmurs, and breathless with dismay, sought the expression of Rosolia's face. She lingered behind; and, pointing to the shore, whispered him there he would receive her last adieu.

Lorenzo anxiously spent the evening hours under the shelter of a rocky cavern, from which the tide had receded; and, parting the overhanging foliage of its leafy rocks, watched her coming. In distance he perceived the speronare gliding round the promontory of Vindicari, and hailed it as an omen of

success. The resplendent moon brightened the Mediterranean wave, as trembling at the leaf she trod, the shadows she beheld, the trembling nun advanced to the cavern. The transport of Lorenzo appalled her.—"I come to bid you adieu!" she would have said, but the youth prevented her words.—"Never, Rosolia shall we again part!" exclaimed he; have courage, and we gain a place of safety." Covering her with a long cloak that completely enveloped her figure, and concealed the habit she wore, he gave the signal to his rowers, and carrying her to the speronare, bade them stand off from the coast.

Rosolia, half fainting, dared not break the silence; and Lorenzo, as he supported her on his arm, was engrossed in thoughts that had for their import the safety of his mistress. He had the precaution to provide in the morning

a dress similar to that worn by the lower orders of peasants in Madoni. Its long cloak and hood was calculated to conceal Rosolia's beauty from observation; and fearing danger from her present dress, even from the sailors of his vessel, directed them again to stand in for the lonely creek near Augusta, and there await his return. It was here, under the cover of concealing shade, the nun exchanged her habit; and Lorenzo buried in the ground every vestige of her sacred character, save the veil, with which Rosolia would not part, and which her lover concealed in his bosom.--Throwing herself on the grave of her religion, Rosolia bitterly wept!

"Rejoice!" said the youth, raising her to his bosom; "you are mine, Rosolia: and never did Heaven frown on the union of such tender hearts!"

" Spread your sails for Ischia," cried the triumphant youth, as he regained his bark; " smile," he whispered to the trembling Rosolia; " the shores swiftly recede."

CHAPTER VII.

" Repentance comes; but those it might benefit
" are gone."

MEANTIME, the Duke and Olivia felt the remembrance of Lorenzo embitter their triumph. We will recur with the reader to the events attending their first meeting, more clearly to elucidate the governing principles of both. The latter, a Calabrian, had first been introduced to Julian at Reggio by a nobleman, who disgusted with her manner, and impoverished by her extravagance, made no opposition to the preference she gave. Verdura enjoyed his triumph; and, in the society of Olivia, forgot her, who true to her heart's first impulse, loved him ardently. The death of Constantia soon gave a place to the countess, and a guardian to

Rosolia. The nobility of Palermo, in whom the gallantry of the Marino excites no scandal, smiled more in contempt than anger, as Verdura led the Calabrian to every festive scene, and placed her in his palace as the idol of idolatry. A woman of virtue would have had less ascendancy over the duke. Olivia's person, in the style of beauty he admired; her haughty demeanour, the counterpart of his own; her extravagance and banquets, equalling the voluptuous queen of Egypt, excited only his emulation, and years rolled on under her soft dominion till inclination became habit; perhaps, a stronger chain. It was after an absence of some length, Sebastian was presented to the duke, who determined to legitimize him by a marriage with his mother. The sickly constitution of the boy, his want of beauty as he advanced in growth, gave

no proof of his reputed origin: but Verdura believed Olivia, when she asserted but one lived whom she would admit to her arms.

Whilst his fortunes appeared to totter, the countess, who, on every occasion asserted her claim to nobility, felt little inclination to join her hand with Julian. Some contested property, becoming at length the duke's, and the resolution of Lorenzo calling for determined steps, the same period Rosolia bent her fair forehead to the veil, witnessed the nuptials of her father.

Venoni, whose poverty more than his will rendered him subservient to Olivia, at her command, traced Lorenzo's steps, from Carlotta's abode to Naples. In vain she urged him, by repeated letters, to rid her of her enemy; Venoni hesitated: he had witnessed the parting of Rosolia and her lover, and it interposed

between him and murder. His replies to Olivia were evasive; the servant of Lorenzo had been indeed bribed; but the papers, on the existence of which so much depended, could not be found. Suddenly, Venoni ceased to trace Lorenzo's steps; he disappeared from Naples, and as his vessel and its crew were lately from Malta, and lay in the retired bay of Sossento, where Di Rossi assumed his disguise and engaged their services, Venoni strongly suspected Olivia had employed some other arm to accomplish her purpose.

The duke, in the choice of the convent of St. Martino for the residence of his daughter, had been guided by the influence of the countess, and the avarice that even profusion will avow to the tenderest connections. Many noble houses existed in Sicily, where salubrious air, smiling landscapes, and cheer-

ful verdure, would have raised the best devotion, that of gratitude to the giver; but the nobility, who consigned their daughters to such convents, bestowed in proportion as they exceeded others, and to the rank themselves held.

A few presents to the altar of St. Martino, consigned Rosolia to its gloomy solitudes and stern inhabitants. The accounts of her declining health moved no pity; and Olivia, hearing of her stay at Syracuse, occasioned the order for her return. When the news reached Palermo, the hapless girl, incapable of submitting to so hard a fate, had left the cottage in the night; and casting herself on the mercy of Heaven, was believed to have destroyed herself, Verdura awoke from apathy.---He thought of Lorenzo, of the influence he had exerted over the weakness of his child, and shuddered that she had passed away from this life to

uncertainty in another. He now solicited Carlotta to visit him; and the benevolent worthy, who felt no resentment for the angry maladictions he had bestowed on the friend of Lorenzo, approached his couch, and beheld with an impression of awe, the effect of grief on the strong passions of Julian.

"Where is Lorenzo?" cried the duke, suddenly.

"It is many months since I have heard from him," replied Carlotta; "and anxious for his fate, I have written to Naples: my correspondents concur in the information of his disappearance; and I grieve to add, in the belief he has met with untimely death."

Olivia covered her face with her robe: "Venoni is faithful!" whispered the fiend, exultingly.

"His father saved me from an assas-

sin!" observed Julian, after a pause; "did he ever tell you so, Carlotta?"

"No, my lord!" replied the count.

His voice had a peculiar tone that aroused Verdura; who, gazing on him, said, "I offer you my hand, count; it is unstained,---you cannot refuse it."

Carlotta, turning from him, cried, "I will pray by you,---by the brother of Leonora;---but, till Lorenzo returns, I cannot grasp that hand.---Reflect, I beseech you, how few were the unhappy youth's enemies---why they were such,---and do not offer it."

"Is it so!" exclaimed Verdura, as the count, greatly agitated, left him; "methinks, my honours glide away. Let us leave Palermo, Olivia; devise new pleasures; those I have tasted lose their relish."

Carlotta, on his return, entered the apartment of his daughter;---"*On Death!*

my child!" said he, taking a volume of Plato from her hand.

"*Ambition!* my father!" replied the pallid girl; "the grave is rich!---for, Lorenzo rests there!"

The equipages of Verdura, at the command of Olivia, swiftly conveyed him towards his estates in the Valdi Noti.

Near the mountains of the Plazzo Nuovo the retinue halted till the *campiere* joined them; and a severe thunder-storm coming on, the duke, Olivia, and Sebastian, sought the shelter of the inn; a mean hut at the base of the mountains. The host, who had received intelligence of a band of Calabrian robbers having established themselves in the adjoining heights, was loud in exaggerated accounts of the strangers' exploits. Olivia, turning up her lip, contemptuously enquired, "if the robbers of

Sicily were not as expert as the Calabrians?"

"Undoubtedly, *Nostri Excellenzi*," said the man, bowing low, and mistaking the meaning of her question; "undoubtedly, the Sicilians excel too; but I have always thought that rogues thrive best from home:---the Calabrians make sure work here;---but all as it pleases *Nostri Excellenzi*."

The duke, impatient to be gone, soon retired from the hut, where the children were praying round St. Rosolia; and declaring he had no fears but of the *campiere* themselves, mounted without regarding the dissatisfied looks of the men, and led up acclivities, down whose woody sides, clouds charged with electric fluid, darkly hung. About three leagues from the inn, the storm renewed in all its violence; and the duke ordered his train to disperse among the breaks

of the mountains, in quest of some cave where the countess might be sheltered from the inclemency of the weather.

After long search, during which the company became involved in the intricacies of the mountain, one of the guards announced his discovery of a ruin, under whose remains the party might be screened from the night, now fast approaching. The duke, taking his pistol in one hand, and leading Sebastian with the other, approached the building, followed by Olivia. It appeared the abode of silence and desolation. Entering an inner court, they traversed the remains of rooms destitute of furniture, ornament, or the appearance of having been inhabited many years.

"Cut down some branches, and kindle a fire in the court," said the duke to his attendants, as he shuddered at

the chilling air of evening; " desolate as this place is, we must remain during the night:---the storm increases," observed he, as heavy peals of reverberating thunder shook the building to its centre; " retire, Olivia, to the inner apartment, with your maids and Sebastian; I shall remain here;---all has the appearance of security."

The wearied group of females, exhausted by fatigue and terror, soon sunk into slumber; nor did the attendants of the duke long watch. Julian alone awaked;---the elemental strife that surrounded him, raged calmly, compared to a mind torn by the conflict of disgrace, wounded pride, and self-reproach. By degrees the night grew calm; and breaking in majesty through the clouds, the moon appeared, bright and beautiful in unsullied light.

The tempest ceased to rave over the

scathed woods, and shortly in murmurs expired, giving way to a death-like stillness. The transition affected the imagination; it reminded Julian of calm succeeding storm in that ocean he believed to roll over the bosom of his self-destroyed child; and, starting at the idea of her pure and delicate form rising from its watery tomb, to meet the beam of that orb, beneath whose ray spirits are said to arise from the depth of waters, he left his seat, and pacing the passages of the building, sought by the sound of his steps to dissipate the visions of fancy. Turning the angle of the building, he observed two men advance; and, by the light of the moon, now shining in full brilliancy, remarked they were in uniform, and armed. Retiring behind a pillar of the portico, he listened with anxiety to their discourse.

"Giovanni," cried one of the banditti to his companion; "it is unlucky our captain was not out to night; we could have hardly missed the duke."

Verdura redoubled his attention.

"Pshaw!" cried Giovanni, "a Sicilian duke is hardly worth the plunder; but our leader, I suppose, wishes to treat with him as old Domincho did with the Bishop of Syracuse; but, believe me, a thieving nobleman stands less chance than a pilfering churchman."

"Come, come," said the robber, "no more of the church; may I never receive absolution if the lightning has not shivered the chesnuts in the form of a cross, over the place where we concealed the murdered man!"

"Good!" cried the other, you shall be confessor to our troop; and I begin your office by telling you, when I hear a robber talk thus, I feel a great

inclination to make him such another grave for the lightning to consecrate."

"Who is that?' demanded one of the men, as Verdura, in an attempt to follow them, stumbled over some fragments of the ruin.

"A benighted traveller," said he firmly; "who demands you would conduct him to your leader."

The men, astonished at his authoritative tone, complied; and walking on either side of their prisoner, led him to the end of a building, where a door opened to the under apartments. Descending from thence, immense excavations appeared, though whose branchings large iron lamps lighted groupes of banditti, feasting after the fatigue of the day. Opening a door in the wall, Verdura's conductors introduced him to their captain, who reclining on a couch, covered with skins, was incapa-

ble of rising, from a thorn having penetrated his leg; and to which was owing the absence his men lamented.

The banditti related the circumstances of their meeting with Verdura; and their leader gazing on him some minutes, ordered them to retire.---"One who seeks me," said he, as he pointed to a seat, "should be treated as a guest."

The duke gazed some time on the robber without reply. He had seldom seen so handsome a man:---his mien was noble and dignified; he seemed born to command. Recovering at length from his surprise, he accepted the seat; and as his entertainer filled his glass, desiring him to drink to the success of his next enterprise, fixing his eyes on him, "the last," said he, "has not wholly failed: you sought the Duke of Verdura, and he is now in your power:---all he re-

quires of you, is protection to the duchess, her child, and attendants, who as yet are ignorant of the danger of the retreat they have chosen."

"Had we met you armed, our valour would have been tried," said the robber; "as it is, I take no advantage of those whom the elements have placed in my power."

"Your sentiments are noble, replied Verdura; "the discourse of your men induces me to believe I can serve you: command aught of me the laws of Sicily forbid me not to grant."

"Your boasted laws have, however, been infringed in favour of many," observed Rizzinico: "we will wave this, till I explain my claims, by a recital of my story: they are those which one noble has on another."

After ordering a party of his men to protect the duke's family, the board was

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spread, and Verdura invited to partake of fruits and wine. Verdura expressed his curiosity concerning Rizzinico's story, and the robber began.

" I am," said he, " of an ancient family in Calabria, that of Leone:" (the duke started; but without noticing his emotion, Razzinico proceeded;) " my brother and myself, nearly of an age when I succeeded my father in his possessions, were, during our infancy, youth, and manhood, inseparable. When misfortune, my lord, feelings of disgrace or disappointment crowd on my bosom, I turn my thoughts to my early years; and can forget an hour of anguish in the contemplation of better days.

" Alfrido's beauty and accomplishments rendered his society as pleasing as his goodness made it desirable. I doated on him with the affection of a father; and fancying the solitude and

keen air of Calabria affected his health, removed him to gayer scenes. We made together the tour of Italy, and the youth escaped its allurements with a virtue which might have shamed his elder brother. Passionately attached to women, I did not travel without transitory attachments. The masked carnival, the vintage of Tuscany, the grave solitudes of Rome, the pastoral scenes of the environs of Salerno, by turns received my homage to the varied beauty of their fair. Alfrido, more constant, wisely reserved his best affections for a purer flame; and whilst I pursued the dissipations of Italian towns, after evenings in which study was relieved by the pencil or music, laid himself without remorse on his pillow.

" From infancy it had been my custom to visit my brother's apartment at evening and morning. Often, when re-

turning from tumultuous scenes, have I envied a slumber, over whose balmy quiet conscience shed its roses; and hurried from him with resolves the first bright eyes dispersed.

"If my brother remained insensible to the power of beauty, the fair sex regarded his blooming youth with less indifference. The Neapolitan women, who breathe intrigue, tried their allurements without success; and it generally became my province to reconcile the fair writers of the many billets sent Alfrido, to the contempt he evinced of their favours.

"Our tour completed, we returned to Calabria; and near the mountains of La Regina met with an adventure whose consequences have been fatal. Near the road perceiving a lady apparently in much distress, her domestics surrounding the vehicle she had quitted, and

which a few peasants were endeavouring to repair, Alfrido instantly quitted our carriage at my request, and offered his services to the lady; who, on a near survey, appeared the handsomest female I had yet seen. She wore a widow's dress; but her youth and a certain coquettry perceivable through the pensiveness she assumed, induced me strongly to suspect her as one of those adventurers who leave Italy to ensnare youth: I was, however, mistaken; for Olivia was a Calabrian.——Are you unwell?" said Leone, observing the duke change colour.

"No!" replied Verdura; "I pray you continue:---believe me, I am deeply interested in your words!"

"Olivia," continued the robber, "was the daughter of one of the higher classes of peasantry, who, hearing from domestics of our intended arrival, had thus

laid in wait to essay her charms on my heart. From the moment of our meeting, Alfrido seemed most to engage her attention; but so much did her beauty and wit please me, that, in a few hours I had devised many schemes to pursue the remainder of our journey together. Her intention, she informed me, was to reside at Reggio, on a small pension left her by her husband, an officer in the Neapolitan service. I found it by no means difficult to conquer her scruples as to the propriety of continuing our route, or of persuading her to remain some time at a castle near Mileto belonging to my estate. Olivia here became my mistress; cherishing at the same time a passion for my brother that inspired him with horror. He at this period formed an attachment to a fair girl, daughter to the Marquis Rossarno; and, from the vicinity of her father's

abode, and the approbation of her parents, had frequent opportunities of seeing his mistress. The dissimilarity of our dispositions, and the scenes to which he returned from his beloved Florida, the disgusting passion of Olivia, and the jealous suspicions she contrived to infuse into my bosom, at length banished my beloved brother from my house, over which Olivia now exerted unbounded sway. She assumed the title of Countess Leone; but such was my infatuation, that her caprices pleased; nor did I blush at her assuming the name of a chaste mother.

"During the sultry months of summer, I resided at a house I possessed near Reggio; and under vined bowers contemplated Charibdis and its vortex of waters, unheeding the more dangerous emotions of the bosom on which I reclined. Never did woman possess more

varied powers;---my fickle fancy yielded to the chain of her, in whom the simple villager, the haughty sovereign, or the tender lover, by turns displayed their graces.

" I still loved my brother; but united as he now was to his Florida, I hesitated to invite him to the bowers of Circe. Olivia, who affected contempt towards my brother's bride, at length urged me to invite them to Reggio, and consented to remain in retirement during their visit. Her motives were strong ones; my coffers, exhausted by her incessant demands, her unbounded extravagance, needed replenishing; and but from one source could it be expected. Infatuated as I was, my brother did not pass my threshold, without exciting in me emotions arising from other causes than those of interest. Casting his eyes around, he perceived his Florida had

received the homage of her virtue from Olivia. The meretricious ornaments, the luxurious paintings, the wanton sculptures, had disappeared; and, smiling with his accustomed sweetness, he led his bride to my embrace.

"This, my lord, was the last happy day that rose on my life; I may, therefore, be excused from dwelling on it. Our repast was spread in a portico, rich with overhanging vines, from whose elevation the lofty shores of Calabria and Sicily were alike descried. Etna, crowned with its perennial snows, rose in the clear blue horizon on the wide bosom of the Mediterranean; the Liparis scattered their isles; nor was the home view such as left a want in prospect: behind us rose our rugged native hills, below, spread enchanting gardens of volcanic origin, blushing with blossoms and fruit. The graceful palm gently

rustling over our heads, fanned Florida with its date-bearing branches, whilst the almond scattered its blossoms at her feet. Alfrido hanging over her with enamoured looks, urged her to love his brother; and related tales of his youth and our past endearments in words that planted daggers in my bosom.

" He might, my lord, have told how, regardless of his honour and his youth, I had basely betrayed the trust Heaven confides to an elder brother, and exposed his bloom to temptation, and the far more dangerous example of my vices.

" Florida, innocently gay, sought to to dispel my gloom, and in part succeeded; but I felt unequal to the disclosure of the reasons which had induced me to invite the long estranged brother to my abode. Alfrido spared

me the pain, and generously urged his fortune on my necessities. ‘ Look at my bride,’ urged he, as falteringly I spoke of himself; “ tell me, would not a band of jewellery disfigure Florida’s waving tresses; an embroidered robe encumber her graceful limbs?---Her smiles declare her will. As to me, Leone, a hunter’s garb suits the exercise of a Calabrian. Let me but preserve the honour of my name, and the stars and badges of pomp may seek other breasts.’

“ I coloured as Alfrido spoke; but the generous gift he bestowed, far exceeding my expectations, shortened his stay: he quitted, from delicacy, one with whom he would willingly have passed his life.

“ Olivia now returned, and with her every banished revel;---again I met her eye, and sunk to its allurement; again

listened to her words, and blessed their poison.

" It is difficult, my lord, to describe the gradations of vice: few there are, that hurried to the precipice and bade boldly to leap, would not recoil with horror. I became a murderer and a robber; but the approach to my crimes was imperceptible:-- I awoke not, till driven from society, its contempt taught me what I was.

" Olivia covetted the wealth that remained from my brother's lavish gift; she hated his wife with the revenge of unreturned passion. Often during the height of our midnight banquet would Florida's name mix with her inebriated laugh, her person meet her envious scorn, and her virtue fade before her invidious thoughts.

" A purer atmosphere surrounded my brother's abode; he knew my chain, but

forbore to reproach me; nay, when the hour approached that Florida smiled even in anguish, at the idea of the happiness the moment would confer on him, and a babe was born, he bade me, even me, rejoice with him!

"'Is it so!' cried Olivia, placing her foot frantically on the fragments of his letter; 'we will rejoice! be firm, Leone! shall an infant stand between us and fortune!---that,' said she, with a convulsive laugh, 'would be to subdue the lion with a reed!---Why do you tremble?' exclaimed she, 'Salerno loves me; and, if I mistake him not, does not recoil at shadows.'

"'I cannot guess your aim, Olivia,' said I sorrowfully; 'none better knows how I have impoverished Alfrido;---an elder brother, his less wealthy possessions are exhausted by me, and involved in the ruin of my fortunes!'

"The abandoned woman paused.---I heard no more of her resentments; but in silence, dark and impenetrable, she veiled them from my observation. The horrors she had awoke gradually left me, and believing the violence of her words had seldom connection with her actions, we again exchanged smiles: she even urged me to visit my brother; and remembering that though residing near Reggio, I had not congratulated him, I praised her for the request, and departed for his abode.

"A low sound of mourning crept through the apartments, seemingly deserted by the domestics, and appalled my heart. Following its murmurs, I entered a low room, where pale as the marble of the statuary, Florida extended her supplicating hands over her convulsed child;----its little features

struggled with death a short moment, then stiffened to clay."

"I received my brother on my bosom: 'Kind Leone!' exclaimed he, 'you avoid the hour of joy, but participate in that of grief!---thanks, my brother! support my Florida!---the tender mother sinks under her sorrow!'

"When I returned to my abode, Olivia attempted not an expression of satisfaction at the untimely death of the innocent, or the grief of her she hated; I believed her heart softened, and never had Olivia greater power over mine!

"During four years, Florida bore my brother many children; but, resembling those tender flowers that sicken at the sun, they faded and died, when affection was more lavish of tenderness; their delicate mother, thus rending one by one the strings of her breaking heart, gave little promise of surviving the last

pregnancy; and my brother, distracted at the ruin of his bliss, haggard and abstracted, avoided all eyes but those whose beam seemed quivering with life's last fire.

" Vicious habits had not yet so steeled my bosom, that I felt not a brother's grief; but the changing manners of Olivia more concerned me: my finances no longer sufficed her pleasures, and Salerno succeeded me in her favour. At the discovery, jealousy roused all the wilder passions in my breast; but smothering my resolves, I determined to watch her motions, and take a deadly revenge.

" The evening on which I resolved to have confirmation of Olivia's falsehood, under pretence of indisposition, she retired to her apartment, and left me to the sad society of criminal thoughts.--- My ideas were frenzied, in expectation

of demands I could not answer. The discovery of debts contracted with dishonour, joined to the receding affection of her for whom I had thus hazarded fame, gave me pangs language cannot express.---Used to rely with the weakness of a child on the strong and masculine energies of Olivia, I sought her couch, and in the imbecility of grief and ruin, entreated her aid.

"'It is true, my lord,' said she coolly, 'your disgrace is even at your doors; Velasco doubts the manner in which you have won his money;---you must restore it.'

"'How!' cried I frantically, 'how!---know you not, woman, that riches have dissipated at your touch?'

"'Lately, my lord,' cried Olivia, with insulting indifference; 'your jealousy of me has deprived you of thought: for once, I am your friend; I repeat, this

sum must be paid, or ignominy and imprisonment will be the consequence!---How will the mob of Reggio deride Leone!'

"'Hold!' cried I, mad with furious emotion, I swear to execute your wish!---this!---save me only from this!---

"'Listen!' said Olivia; 'the night is dark, the approach to the church of St. Stephano lonely.---Velasco seeks an interview with one who will not come!---He would rob you of your mistress as well as your fame!---Has a Calabrian no dagger for this injury?'

"'He dies!' exclaimed the victim of vicious love.'

"'More!' cried Olivia, grasping me by the arm; 'Velasco carries gold with him;---it will aid our escape.'

"'A robber, too!' exclaimed I; 'Oh, Olivia! must this be?'

"'It must!' replied the fiend; 'disguise yourself;---the moments pass quickly.'

"Would,' exclaimed I, in the bitterness of grief, 'I could retard their flight! now am I comparatively innocent, the sin has not reached beyond thought.'

"'No more!' cried the hardened Olivia, urging me to depart.

"A feverish heat inflaming my blood, fear of disgrace, and passion's worst impulse, gave me power to execute the deed. Entering the portico of the church, the darkness scarce aided my purpose; but I struck where the breathings guided me, and rifling the body, fled homeward. A scene, the recollection of which comes on me like a fearful dream, there presented itself; treading, as if the stream of life my hand had shed, pursued me, as if every step mingled with the expiring groans of my victim,

I stole into Olivia's apartment.---My crime had been quicker than her expectation; before her couch stood a beldame, whose wrinkled front and skulking eye gave hideous proof of vice. She appeared to have numbered eighty years of depravity; one hand held a staff to her tottering frame, the other extended a sealed phial.

"'My daughter,' cried the crone, 'never fear but this will remove your bane.---Have any of Count Alfrido's children risen?' said she, with a laugh of triumph that chilled my blood.

"'Better destroy the mother!' exclaimed Olivia; 'this wasting, as it were drop by drop, the blood of Leone, is tedious, and can answer no purpose.---Mother!' cried the fiend, 'I cannot be happy whilst Florida lives!'

"'Will she long disturb you?' replied the hag; 'no, no!' shaking her

palsied head; 'I but this morning took the gold from her hand, and saw her breath flutter on her lips.---You are impatient:---children die, and no suspicion is incurred;---but Florida's death may occasion an investigation that might be fatal to us.---But why,' said the old beldame, 'need you care?---Alfrido's coffers are drained, and a new paramour succeeds his brother.'

"'Oh, Mother!' exclaimed Olivia, 'you know not how sweet is revenge! Alfrido has scorned my love;---his brother reproaches me with his ruin;---to-night they have *met!*" cried she in horrid exultation: "Oh! you know not revenge!"

"I live on it, my daughter," replied the hag: "many a husband has slept by my aid; many a rich parent departed from his gold; and many a faithless lover been hushed by my skill!---but I

must depart:---a few months will make Florida a mother; take, then, what will remove the weeds that encumber your path."

"I heard no more, but fled. Nature yet prevailed; and though my life was worthless, I sought its preservation. Mounting my fleetest horse, I urged its speed to the mountains, and wandered among the fastnesses, subsisting on the charity of a hermit, who removed from the habitations of men, yet felt their distress. In his cell I awoke to the knowledge of all my crimes. With the gold I had purloined from my victim, was a billet:---it was Olivia's hand, and my frenzied glance caught every letter of the abhorred words, as though they had been composed of fire.

"'Your brother is in danger!---he conceals himself from his creditors in the church of St. Stephano. Bring

thither all the gold you can command, and save him from an ignominious fate! Beware lest you excite suspicion;---disguise and the veil of night can alone avert it.---In this cause we unite.'

'OLIVIA.'

"With distracted tones I called on the brother of my youth---my generous preserver from misfortune!---The hermit shrunk from me as I accused myself of crimes that nature shuddered at;---he waxed pale as I shewed him Alfrido's blood, and boasted how uncontaminated the stream had run. I fled from the man of virtue, and herded with robbers. Soon the heart of Leone hardened to his fate; but once only, my lord, have I given way to grief. One of my troop, dispatched for intelligence, brought me information the castle of Oppido was defenceless, the countess's domestics having dispersed

soon after her funeral, with the suspicion of having aided unknown persons in carrying off her only surviving child."

"How long is it since that period?" enquired the duke eagerly.

"Ten years," answered Leone.---It was the age of Sebastian.

"I then made the last sacrifice to nature," continued the robber. "Directing my troop to turn from the castle, I sought it in disguise, and over the tomb of Florida breathed my last prayer.

"Now, my lord," cried Leone, rising and assuming an air of stern and commanding grandeur; "I have wasted time in relations that shew I once acted viciously, and thought weakly. It matters not what I have been; since my stern resolves have given me power,---a power I never will relinquish. In Calabria I served; and leaving the most

pusillanimous of my band as a legacy to my country, I here command soldiers whose enterprise is not to be equalled. Judge, then, if the same league that Dominicho formerly made with the princes of Sicily may not be claimed by me?"

CHAPTER VIII.

" Away! with women weep, and leave me here,
" Fix'd like a man, to die without a tear:
" Or save or slay us both this present hour;
" 'Tis all that fate has left within thy power."

The duke listened to Leone, as he traced the life of her who now shared his honours, with gloomy conviction that Olivia had imposed on him the last of Alfrido's unhappy offspring. Shame, indignation, and horror by turns assailed him; and giving way to his feelings, he addressed the astonished robber, and bade him follow.

" Your wrongs, Leone," exclaimed he, " call for justice:---behold," cried

he, " what will wipe off your stains and my own!"

The robber gazed on the dagger, and waving to his soldiers, followed. The Duke, leading him to the part of the ruin where Olivia yet slept, pointed to her as she lay.

" Behold," said he, " her who has murdered your relatives!---who has covered you with crimes, and compelled you to wander in ignominy and banishment!---Look on her who has alienated me from an innocent child, and urged her to self-murder!---Wake, Olivia!---your word when Alfrido died was revenge.---Leone, be both our wrongs avenged!"

Olivia, starting from slumbers before whose unquiet sleep the murdered had arisen, gazed on the duke with dismay.

Years had withered her bloom;

yet Leone recognised the syren whose voice had lured him from virtue.--- Presenting himself to her appalled sight, he demanded of her Alfrido and his murdered offspring. The affrighted Olivia, snatching Sebastian to her arms, prostrated herself before the injured Leone, as she bade his uncle receive him.

Verdura turning a deaf ear to the principle that would have withheld his arm from a defenceless woman, and spared her crimes for repentance, furiously advanced, and plunged his dagger in her bosom. The action was so sudden Leone had not time to ward the blow; and his soldiers observing it, and supposing their leader in danger, presented their trombones at Verdura, who fell covered with wounds.

" Grieve not, Leone," said the duke, as the robber bewailed his misfortunes;

" you are exonerated in my heart, and shall be so in my dying words. Oh!" cried he, raising himself on his side, " the pains of mind exceed those of the body!---I have justice to execute, and require the presence of the absent. Leone, let me be carried to the nearest town by your men, whom I swear shall receive no injury in the execution of their charitable office. From thence my attendants can convey me to Palermo. Ask from me, Leone, what wish you will, I swear to execute it."

" Behold this boy!" replied Leone, bringing Sebastian to the duke; " assist him in the recovery of his father's possessions, if you live;----should your wounds prove mortal, consign him to those who succeed you.---Brother, friend, preserver!" cried he, lifting up his eyes to heaven, " if the words of a murderer ascend, hear me in this sole expiation:

I would not retain the boy whom my heart yearns to embrace---I would not bid him follow my paths!"

Verdura, arrived by slow stages at Palermo, sent for Carlotta, and consigned Sebastian to his care. The surgical assistance called in to himself, though it could not effect a complete cure, prolonged his life many months, during which the count consented to discourse with him, and was induced to believe his protestations of innocence concerning the extraordinary disappearance of Lorenzo. In this belief, he explained to the duke the nature of those proofs on which the succession of the youth, in the event of Julian's dying without issue, were secured. They consisted of the certificate of Di Rossi's marriage with Leonora, signed by the monk who performed the cere

mony; that of her child's birth at Rome; her letter, inclosing these papers to Constantia; and a few lines written in the envelope by the latter, a short time before her death, on depositing them to under the ruins of the temple, where a providential accident discovered them to Rosolia. The duke had not doubted the marriage of his sister:—as Lorenzo had predicted, the hour now arrived, when she burst in fancy the barriers of the tomb, and beckoned him to the silent grave and uncertain judgment.

"It is Leonora's hand," said Verdura, as Carlotta enclosed the folds of her letter to Constantia; "I can bear its contents."

The count, in the tone that goodness assumes to comfort sorrow, began the noble Leonora's epistle to her sister and friend:—

" *Loved and regretted,*

" Amid the solitude of my life, the undeviating tenor of my melancholy days, I have yet one consolation, the belief sorrow has filled her cup solely for my lip; and that Constantia is happy!---Worthy as she is of the reward of virtue, I joy in believing they have been bestowed! Impute not, my friend, to Leonora, indifference:---if, when bidding farewell to Sicily, she sought no embrace from friendship, it was to preserve you from the resentment of Julian she thus acted! The scene is now altered; years retire, and like the receding ocean, disclose the wrecks of happiness. Who shall reproach Di Rossi!---who insult his memory!---He sleeps, Constantia, with the departed, and Love has broke his arrows on his tomb!

" When imagination paints me, re-

member me not as her, who, surrounded by pleasures, trod on the boundaries of virtue; not as, encircled by the opiates of time, I urged the viol or the song:---Silent, deserted, unheeded, my soul's lord scarce inhabits a dwelling more solitary!---My garments mean, my air humbled to my fortunes, the daughter of Verdura can scarce be recognised. You are about to become a mother, Constantia;---a mother may therefore implore you in behalf of her child! a son lies in the bosom, and presses the lips, ever constant to his father:---I shew him to the libertine, and he retires from my path.---For this son of love, this child of regret, I live.

"Distance softens recollection to tenderness: I forget the frowns of Julian, and only recall his smiles. I pray for you, Constantia, that you may retain his heart, while I tremble lest your

virtues may fail to do so. Never let my proscribed name hover on your lips. Why should my faded form glide on the visions of luxury; my unprotected state awaken the blush of pride!---Anxiously as I would retire from such scenes, let me come upon your hours of retirement. Constantia, rejoice, that abandoned in youth and bloom, I have turned from the voice of the flatterer;---that, in poverty and obscurity, I have rejected the gold of the sensualist.

"I consign the documents to your care, Constantia, that prove me a wife and a mother.---Their importance is not perceivable in my present state;---all enquiry and proofs of my virtue pass between the voice of Heaven and that of conscience; but, the time may come when Lorenzo may claim them at your hands. Meantime, a mother's careful hand draws a veil over imaginary gran-

deur, lest his dazzled youth be rendered incapable of mental ascent,---of rising above his fate.

"The gloomy magnificence of Rome, its vast solitudes, its ruined palaces, suit my state. Losing Di Rossi, I would the world were his tomb, and that all the objects of its transitory day were mournful.---Yet I forbear——these lines will reach Sicily, the paradise of my youth, the smiling abode of blooming pleasure and vegetative beauty!---Cultivate, Constantia, for my sake, those bowers where I have been taught the lessons of affection!---refresh, mid sultry hours, the foliage under which I have reclined and listened to love!

"Whilst I survive, my sister, let no rash intercession for me awaken the resentment of those whom you have vowed to honour; but when the scene closes, and I share the lonely dwelling

of Di Rossi, acquaint Julian,---the once gay Leonora, her who sheltered his tender years, and viewed no sun arise, no evening descend, without prayers for his safety, has struggled through a few stormy years, and reached the only object of her desire---the grave of her husband!---And if you are destined to lift the velvet lip of infancy to his embrace, say, whilst the father exults over his babe, that mine was brought forth in sorrow, reared in hardship, and remains unprotected;---no arms extend to embrace him---no bosom throbs to shelter him!

" Farewell, Constantia! pour your meek spirit into Julian's heart;---soften it to mercy, dispose it to good!

" Should my boy ever reach the country in which his mother first saw the light, the Count Carlotta will befriend him.---To that nobleman my obligations

are infinite:---rejected as the lover, he became the friend; and with dignity recovering from his passion, would have taught me to subdue mine!---Alas! Carlotta, the flowers of my young love intermingle with the cypress; their blossoms strew the funeral urn, their promised fruit withers on the grave. Censure retires from such scenes; cold prodence pursues its object no farther.

"Constantia, adieu! adieu, Sicily, land of delight!---my eyes shall never again gaze on your vine-covered heights, your bowers of myrtle, your blue expanse of waters; yet the prayer of an exile shall ascend, and mine be preferred at the foot of distant altars!---Happy be the shores of my country;---happy the lovers that seek her verdant shades!---Friend, Sister, adieu!---a long adieu!

"LEONORA."

On the envelope of the letter Constantia had written these words:

"Received from my regretted Leonora, and deposited at chance; trusting Providence will guide her friends to the spot, and guard it from her enemies!"

"My wife loved her," said Verdura. "Poor Leonora!" exclaimed he, "if wealth can bring the mysterious fate of Lorenzo to light, mine shall be exhausted in the discovery.---Alas!" exclaimed he, in sorrow; "I utter the words of a madman; extravagance has wasted my fortunes, and Olivia too surely has wreaked her revenge!"

"I own, my lord," replied Carlotta, "little hopes remain; but yesterday I received letters from Naples, informing me every search has been vain; yet, might I advise, you will now pave the way to his rights, should he return;---

these papers, my lord, admit no doubt of your sister's marriage;—pronounce Lorenzo your heir."

Verdura, whose wounds were of a nature to preclude the hope of his existing many months, consented to this act of justice; and in the presence of the nobles of Palermo, executed a deed, by which, during two years after his decease, his possessions were the charge of the Count Carlotta, in trust for Lorenzo. Should enquiry prove fruitless at the expiration of that period, the titles and estates became the property of the next heir. To this the sanction of royalty was obtained; and the duke, calmed from having done an act, springing from that acceptable sacrifice, repentance, as he approached his end, felt an ease of mind unknown to his former years.

CHAPTER IX.

" Hence is she borne, safe o'er the deeps profound,
" To Ischia, water'd by the waves around;
" Her looks demand respect; and where she goes,
" Beneath her tender feet the herbage blows;
" To deck her brows, the fair tress'd seasons bring
" A garland, breathing all the sweets of spring."

" Behold, my Rosolia," said Lorenzo, as he led her up the rocky steeps that unite the gardens of Ischia with the ocean, " an omen of happiness! see, in yon flowering myrtle, two doves hover round the sacred shelter of their young! May we not believe the emancipated birds of Syracuse have spread their light pinions, and in Ischia love in security?"

Rosolia blushed; but felt the allusion with the ideas of Lorenzo.

It was not till the speronare had raised her sails for Malta, till Rosolia and himself appeared the humble possessors of a rural abode, and a holy monk of an adjoining monastery had given his benediction to their nuptials, that security seemed to guard the youthful pair. The humble inhabitants of the beautiful island to which they had fled, evinced no suspicion. Lorenzo purchased a cottage, situated at the point of a projecting rock, at the foot of Mount Epomeo, over whose craggy shores the thrice productive vine, the sombre olive, and the glowing pomegranate, fell in variegated foliage. His features artificially bronzed, his humble garb, and the affected simplicity of his discourse, favoured his story. Rosolia exposed her delicacy to the sun-beam; and dressed as a Tuscan peasant, mingled with the kind and affectionate

people. The girls of Ischia, to whom the songs and dances of love are known, and who possess the sensibility that gives grace to both, wove verse in praise of the lovers; and seated beside them, offered their simple tribute and their friendship.

A few short months changed the delicate forms of Lorenzo and his bride: the former accustomed himself to the hardy exercises of the peasant, and cultivated his garden, teaching its luxuriance to creep to the feet of Rosolia, or shade her seat; skirted the craggy shores in a fisherman's boat, or spread nets in the sea-laved grotto.

Meantime, the fair companion of his exile wove ribbons or lace, beneath the lofty chesnuts; and yielded herself to the feelings that were naturally inspired in one, who long removed from the sweets of affection, felt for the first

time the happiness of loving and being beloved. The apprehensions that long fluttered round her heart were now dispelled:---no intruder appeared, no eye glanced suspicion on her;---and her bosom warmed by the simple affection of the islanders, received and returned it. Surrounded by happy groupes of age, she listened to the songs of their children, who, returning from their temporary excursions to the curving shores of Naples and Portici, in wild, though sweet measure, warbled the *improvisatori*, or incidents of their voyage.

Lorenzo at evening returning from the labour of the day, would pause to survey a groupe of which the bride of his love formed the most lovely ornament. He beheld her not attired with the classic taste of a Sicilian palace, or hid from him by the mist of the monastic veil, but attired as the

peasants of Tuscany, her hair fastened by a knot of flowers; a silk jacket pressing the delicacy of her waist, and a small hat of coarse straw giving a *piquante* air to features on which Phœbus had shed his enamoured ray. Far be it from the moralist to conceal, amid their impassioned feelings, the breathings of conscience for violated vows:---often, when the resplendent moon lured the lovers to wander through the scented groves, Rosolia's eye would seek the spot on which a rude crucifix was raised, and remember her veil lay beneath it. Even at the altar, when Lorenzo and love ruled the hour, she whispered, "Can you receive my vows! the first are broken:---Oh! Lorenzo, I deserve not confidence!"

The lover, when thought broke on his hours of love, shuddered at reflection. A zealous catholic, he had vio-

lated the church; and should ever the hapless companion of his fortunes excite suspicion, and be traced, her fate would be such as nature trembled to contemplate.

In the grove, the rural abode, amid the charms of the enchanting scenes of nature, the lovers thought but of joy; but with faltering steps approached the altar, shunned the confessional, and trembled at the prayer. When the festival of St. Rosolia approached, and the illuminated chapels round the fiery Epomeo lighted their holy tapers, the cottage of the *Apulian Peasants* was dark and deserted. Amid the smiles of heaven, the salubrity of climate, the beauty of nature, conscience is not stilled; it distrusts its happiness, as the calm preceding the tempest: it cannot admit the errors of others as an extenuation of its own; or say, because a

father is unjust, a child shall be impious. Thus would Lorenzo meditate, as oppressed by sultry toil, he sought some retired shade, and at a distance from Rosolia, mused on the fancies her smiles could alone disperse. Thus would the *wedded nun* ruminate, as the gay villagers dispersing, she contemplated the shrine of her humble abode, till in imagination the mild looks of the Madona changed to frowns of reproach. During the first months of marriage these spectres of the mind approached not the lovers; again they retired, as a more joyous season of tenderness advanced.

Rosolia could love her babé without offence---Lorenzo gaze on it without remorse:---its virtuous education would be the expiation of their fault. The youth no longer sought the woods or shores; but hovered round the beautiful

shrine of his child with the solicitude of the parent bird;---again the companion of his error and his fortunes smiled. "Smile yet once again," would Lorenzo urge; "I have been haunted by phantoms, my love; but they fly before those sweet beams, as the rays of morning disperse the darkness of night:---together let us seek the altar, Rosolia; methinks I can look on it without pain."

On their return they found the villagers assembled, and joined their sports, amid a scene where nature rivalled fiction. Swelling clusters of gold and purple grapes depended from the tall branches of vines, whose tendrils fastening round the lemon trees, rich in late blossom, formed festoons of beautiful effect. Here, on the verdant turf, the daughters of Ischia danced to their tamborines, the weaving and graceful *tarantella*. In the pauses their melo-

dious voices breathed the tones and amatory tales of Italy.

From the lawn the parting cliffs disclosed a tranquil bay, to whose sands a winding path led down the declivities of the hill. Here the rich prospect of the Italian shores burst on the view; scattered palaces, woods, vineyards, and the famed Vesuvius, combining magnificence and beauty.

Lorenzo had once ventured to Naples; and in his mean attire passed the houses of his intimates, the paths of his studies, unobserved. A year had passed at Ischia, and during its lapse no intruder approached its fairy scenes; the traffic of its simple people, and the curiosity of travellers, brought no visitant to disturb his repose.

Lorenzo, however news of Carlotta might bestow pleasure, dared not breathe a name known in other days. Words

cannot express his astonishment, when, during the frequent changes of the entertainment, he heard his story sung by a Neapolitan musician:---in every point the verse had followed truth, till its *denouement*, when Rosolia was said to sink beneath the wave.

"Your are an *Improvisatore?*" said the agitated Lorenzo.

"Come," cried an old man that sat near, laying his hand on his shoulder, "my friend Luchesse loves the muse; give him a specimen of your own composition, Marco."

"Your subject?" demanded the poet.

Lorenzo, fixing his eyes on the swarthy countenance of Marco, bade him sing the power of love.---With animated gesture and quick flow of language, he began,---every word awakening apprehension in Lorenzo's heart.

Rosolia, accompanied by one of her

young friends, had left the spot ere the musician appeared, and Lorenzo blest the chance that withdrew her from the doubts that distracted his breast. When Marco sung of the passion overcoming heroes, urging or calling from the battle, Lorenzo calmly listened to extravagances calculated to raise the smile of contempt: but when the flame was said to fire even the altars, and to burn more fiercely from the smothering veil, Lorenzo's cheek grew pale, his lips quivered, and his trembling hands caught the tree against which he leaned for support. Dreadful power! to which the commission of a crime consigns the perpetrator. No eye beams as it were wont, no sigh of reason, no fall of leaf but awakes the timid fancy:---the words of a peasant seem to rise to importance, those of a prince to sink to the recesses of the heart.

Lorenzo saw the object of his fears embark, with the mandolins he had purchased from the Ischians, and slowly sought his home.

Rosolia met him with looks of horror, and throwing herself into his extended arms, exclaimed; "We are lost, Lorenzo! inevitably lost!---I have seen Venoni; perhaps even now he waits to drag me to punishment---to death!---Hapless husband! I have destroyed you! Oh, Lorenzo! forgive me ere I die---ere I become the living tomb of your child!"

The appalled youth checked his feelings in compassion to the sufferer; gently supporting her on his bosom, he bade her rely on him.---"If our peace is fled from Ischia," said he, "we will seek it elsewhere.---My boat lies in the creek below; give yourself to my arms, Ro-

solia, and I will bear you down the steep descent."

"Forbear, Lorenzo," exclaimed she; "the hand of nature is on me!---Seek, beloved youth, some other clime;---hasten, ere it be too late, and save what is most valuable---yourself!"

"Hear me Heaven, whom I have offended; saints, whose insulted shrines are marked with our proscribed names!" exclaimed Lorenzo, kneeling before her; "may no sun ever arise, no blessing be scattered on my youth, if I forsake her I mourn and love!---No, Rosolia," cried he, pressing her to his heart, "together we live, or together die!"

"Be it so," exclaimed Rosolia. "Oh, blessed Virgin! avert my fate---withdraw my punishment till the hour of peril is past; till I become a mother!"

"Be calm, Rosolia," said Lorenzo: "I summons the family of our neigh-

bour :---be cautious---a word may be fatal, and your fears may yet be groundless."

Whilst the kind and affectionate females of the peasant's family attended the broken hearted Rosolia, during the trial of nature, Lorenzo traced every path round the abode, without discovering any ground for suspicion. Venoni seemed ever to rise, blasting his happiness by the mystery of his appearance; but he believed the weakened spirits of his wife had deceived her, and that the sanctuary of his love was yet undiscovered.

Again he returned :---the blessing bestowed on females of these climes had not been extended to Rosolia. The anguish of her feelings threatened life; and pain and sorrow marked the hour. Lorenzo, unable to bear the conflict of his mind, again sought, in the coolness

of night, an allay for the fever of his brain. He sought the grove where piety had erected the humble altar, and throwing himself at its feet, wept in anguish, and prayed for Rosolia's life, Rosolia's safety.

What words can paint his feelings, when casting his eyes at the foot of the cross, now illuminated by the moon, he beheld the earth raised, where Rosolia's fatal veil had been deposited. Frantic he flew towards his abode:--the woman whom he had called to the assistance of Rosolia came slowly from it. "My wife! my child!" cried Lorenzo, gazing on her wildly as he spoke.

The peasant bursting into tears, expressively extinguished the lamp she carried.

CHAPTER X.

" Hail, lovely power! whose bosom heaves the sigh,
" When Fancy paints the scene of deep distress;
" Whose tears spontaneous crystallize the eye,
" When rigid Fate denies the power to bless."

OVER the fair form of Rosolia, the villagers strewed flowers, uniting the sweets of spring and autumn; the late violet and early rose hid her babe in a shower of blossom, tender as its infancy, sweet as its innocence. Round the bier on which they silently reposed, the storm past, the tempest hushed, rude images of saints received the homage of holy tapers:---it was their festival; their estranged daughter returned.

The elder villagers assembled to console Lorenzo, the tender hearts of youth wept over Rosolia. Raising her on their arms, they began their sad procession to that grave from whence no sound arises, to tell of pardon; no form ascends to breathe of bliss!---Dreadful uncertainty! what imagination, however familiar with sorrow, can tell the anguish of Lorenzo!---Rosolia was gone:---she had borne to judgment the witness of her crime---that crime to which his forbidden passions had urged her!---Never would the tomb sever to his prayer;---never would she reply to his heart-rending demands of the extent of mercy.

From dark resolves, fearful broodings, the distracted husband was aroused by the voice of tumult.

"Who invades us, in such an hour?"

demanded he, as the recoiling bearers returned their burthen to the bier.

" I demand a nun of St. Martino," answered a monk, entering with a party of armed soldiers, and displaying Rosolia's veil: " I am directed to declare, that whoever opposes her apprehension is excommunicated by the Holy Church, and that to none else is violence to be offered.---Soldiers, do your duty."

" Hold!" cried Lorenzo; " I oppose your violence; I demand why you enter my abode, and invade the chambers of death?---Is not sorrow sacred;---grief such as mine!"

" Our orders justify us," answered the monk; " nothing but the tomb can conceal her we seek."

" Death has saved her!" cried Lorenzo, extending his arms with an expression of wild joy, from which the beholders shrunk; " she has fled from

your grasp; and I, who doated on her, who prized life only for her sake, live to *rejoice* at it!——Take what remains of beauty, of misfortune," added he, waving the mourners from the bier); "her judgment will be pronounced—her punishment awarded," said he, his lip quivering and his tones lowered, "by that Heaven who will likewise judge you!"

The intruders gazed on the cold clay, and struck with awe, silently withdrew. Even the monk remembered he was a *man*; and ejaculating a prayer for the sinner, departed. Venoni remained; the villagers bore Rosolia to her tomb; and rousing Lorenzo from the trance of sorrow, the Italian summoned his attendants, and bore him forcibly to his vessel. On its arrival at Palermo, the youth languished many months a prey to consuming fever. Recollection long

forsook him;---memory in pity withdrew her power, till resignation softened the harsher touches of her page.

Rosolia's tomb had received the floral tribute of another year, when reason, glimmering as it gradually advanced, visited the mind of her lover:---extending his hand, it met the grasp of affection; and throwing back the curtain, he beheld Carlotta.

"Do I dream?" cried he; "surely this Palermo, and I view the man I most esteem!"

"You do not deceive yourself, Lorenzo," replied the count; "my anxious care is rewarded:---but, I charge you," cried he, impressively, "utter no sound by which the past can be recalled; let no dark vision give its colour to your discourse;---rumour must not breathe the fate of Rosolia, or the crime of her seducer!"

"Why am I here?" cried the bewildered hearer; "does one human being care for my safety, or watch over my couch?"

"Leonora's son possesses Verdura," answered the count; "he reposes in the palace of his fathers, and is the charge of Carlotta."

"Venoni! my thoughts wander to him," returned Lorenzo.

"He has saved you from disgrace; and in this act has obliterated former errors.---I have rewarded him," said Carlotta; "and returned to his native country loaded with obligation, no fear arises in my mind of his prudence."

"Ah!" exclaimed Lorenzo, "never can I forget the calamities produced by his fatal appearance at Ischia!"

"Hear me," replied Carlotta; "and never more let the subject pass our lips. I traced Venoni;---long had he hesitated

to execute Olivia's revengeful wishes;---mine for your welfare were explained to him:---when he appeared to Rosolia, when the *Improvisatore* warned you danger was near, and he came to urge your flight, remember Rosolia sought that day the confessional of the convent of Epomeo; she revealed not the name of Lorenzo, but she mourned over the buried veil:---Venoni joined those who came with hostile intentions; he bore you away in safety.---Your story, Lorenzo, rests in his bosom and mine;---the monks of Ischia suspect not the seducer of the nun; the peasants would not recognise him in Verdura."

"And you, generous, noble Carlotta!" cried Lorenzo, when the count finished a detail of events which had occurred during his absence; (that worldly pomp had fled for ever from Julian, and Sebastian and himself long been the

objects of his care,) "how shall your tenderness be repaid, your goodness acknowledged, by the unhappy Lorenzo?"

"On this point, my lord," said Carlotta, with an alteration of manner, a sternness from which his hearer shrunk in consciousness; "we will discourse. Let me recall your attention to the hour in which your departed uncle introduced you to the quiet of my home: your talents and accomplished manners gained my favour;---to these I sacrificed my retired habits:---the knowledge of your birth opened to you my heart;---I conferred on you the highest proof of esteem and confidence I could bestow, that of presenting you to a virtuous family.---For your sake, Lorenzo, I have encountered the insolence of mistaken power, of ostentatious pride.--Your rights have been asserted by me with the zeal of a parent; and that you now inherit the

possessions of Julian, is the effect of my last communications with the late duke. I pledged myself, if your career of youth had been terminated by treachery, you had fallen in the glory of unsullied virtue;---that if you lived, it was in the pursuit of honourable actions.---After the anxieties of suspense, the weary difficulties of search, you were brought me.---How were you brought, Lorenzo? where were the virtuous deeds on which Carlotta had staked his word,---the honour he asserted?"

Lorenzo groaned, and hid his face, as the count continued.

"I press the arrow in your wound," exclaimed Carlotta, "but to extract it with more safety.---It was not now unjust prejudices, unfeeling pride, I had to combat, for your sake;---the arm of religious justice was raised, and I dared to avert its blow!---I ask my reward!---

Can I believe, when I require of Lorenzo to live for active virtue; when I bid him resign the sacrifice offered on Rosolia's tomb to the offended Deity, he will reply, that the life I have preserved, even at the hazard of my fame and the destruction of my unoffending family, is of no avail? or, that consulting only his passions in their violence, he will in one hour draw a saint from the altars of Heaven,---in another, bring a sinner to them, not resigned, penitent, or fitted for the calm holiness of a monastic life;---but, disappointed in criminal pursuits, and reproaching the power that has called its own to trial!"

"Oh, Carlotta!" cried Lorenzo, as burning tears coursed each other down his fevered cheek; "too truly have you guessed my thoughts."

The count, without noticing his words, continued; "As you regain

strength, you must leave Palermo.---A succession of objects, amid scenes sullied by no mournful remembrance, will restore your spirits to their tone.---You must remove awhile from the nobility, amongst whom you are destined to mix;---return, when your eye has lost its fearful glare, your cheek its livid hue, your mind its perturbed sorrow!"

Lorenzo shook his head mournfully.

"Sebastian is your ward," continued Carlotta; "and his restoration to his unhappy father's estates and name, have strong claims on one, whose fate has in many respects been similar. Your situation, Lorenzo, has deprived him of my services; and I have only thus far advanced in my enquiry, that his grandfather, the Count Rossarno lives; but, since the fatal events in Alfrido's family, has not revisited Calabria. The boy, on whom the infamous Olivia had tried

her pernicious drugs, ere she stole him from Florida, has delicacy of health that calls for change of air.---Take him with you, Lorenzo; methinks, the society of children presents a sweet repose to the erring heart; from such it fears nothing; their purity secures it from the lurking serpent, their innocence from reproach."

"Resolve, Lorenzo;---rise from the bed of bodily infirmity with mental strength; and if the character, the friendship of Carlotta be estimable to you," cried the count; "swear to him you will humble yourself to the decrees of Heaven; and venture not to close the gates of life or fortune; that you will visit neither Ischia, or seclude yourself in a monastery;---the first would arm you against your own existence, the last deprive you of the power of benefitting that of others."

Thus Carlotta argued: sometimes as-

suming the severe sternness his parental love for Lorenzo, and his own years and character gave him power to assert; at others, softening into the tenderness the sole surviving relic of early affection inspired.

Lorenzo listened; he took Sebastian to his care, and shortly left Palermo, giving the promise Carlotta required. His retinue was such as to secure the respect due to his rank, without encumbrance to the objects of his journey, the surveying the varied scenery of the continent, and residing at will where inclination prompted.

Lorenzo left Palermo without visiting the villa of Carlotta. The count had not invited him, conscious of the example a father owes his children. Lorenzo's grief must have been accounted for, his absence spoken of; and Rosolia's fate he wished buried like her beauty.

The count had marked the attachment of his daughter to the duke, her grief at his supposed fate, and her joy at the news of his return; but neither her sorrow or her smile gave the father pain. Julia had no selfish passions to combat---no dream of romantic imagination to dispel; nor in her struggle with feeling, was it possible for principle to be overwhelmed.

CHAPTER XI.

" Gay pleasure here all dresses wears,
" And in a thousand shapes appears:
" Pursu'd by Fancy, how she roves
" Thro' airy walks and museful groves;
" Springs in each plant and blossom'd tree,
" And charms in all I hear and see?
" In this Elysium while I stray,
" And Nature's fairest face survey,
" Earth seems new born, and life more bright;
" Time steals away, and smooths his flight;
" And thought's bewilder'd in delight."

Lorenzo passed Ischia in the night, and landing at Civitta Vecchia, proceeded to Sienna, elevated amongst the Apennines, and embosomed by the olive, mulberry, and vines. By slow stages the travellers reached Pisa. It was win-

ter; but Sebastian had filled the duke's carriage with flowers purchased from the peasantry, and amused himself with weaving garlands of roses, carnations, and hyacinths as he journeyed.

The road to Florence winds at intervals by the vine-decked Arno; and Lorenzo as he cast his languid eye over the extent of scenery the way embraced, beheld the rugged barriers on the right contrasted by the cultivated foreground, where oaks and slender laurels rose on ground consecrated to heroes and poets. Insensibly his mind, long abstracted from such objects, felt interest in their appearance; and arrived at Florence, he visited the tomb of Michael Angelo, and reposed on the seat where Dante mused on immortal themes.

Sebastian's delicate health rendered him the constant arbitrator of the duke's journey, or temporary place of abode.

Florence and Bologna, famed for the balsamic mildness of their air, divided three months of the winter. In April Lorenzo proceeded where, from chesnut woods and aged oaks, arose the Appenines, covered with snow, and half hid by a veil of clouds. Descending from their heights, an avenue of trees led to Modena. Lorenzo hastened through its magnificent streets, and regained the road. It led to Correggio, birth-place of the immortal painter;---to Reggio, that of the divine Ariosto. What lover of the pencil but would linger at the former, and recur to the canvas treasured at Bologna?---What enthusiast in verse, not pause where the poet awoke to fame? In contemplation of the pages of 'Orlando,' Lorenzo continued his route through Milan, towards Pavia. A short distance from the latter, the indisposition of the tender boy, over

whom he watched with parental care, occasioned his requesting permission to repose a few hours in a convent situated near the road.

The prior, understanding the rank of his visitor, received him at the entrance of a building whose Gothic grandeur excited admiration in the duke, as he advanced up an avenue of fine trees, to the steps. He was led into a fine hall, paved in Mosaic, and lighted from a lofty dome; folding doors, of curious carved wood, led into the gardens, where alleys of Lombardy poplars were terminated by a crucifix or shrine. Here Lorenzo was offered refreshments, and his young companion placed on a small couch, soon sunk into slumbers excited by fatigue.

The elder monks invited the duke to walk through the monastery, and led him to their church. It was magnifi-

cent and of vast extent; seventeen altars of white marble, inlaid with jasper, onyx, and lapis lazuli, were adorned with exquisite productions of the pencil, the labours of Agostino, Caracci, Guercino, Albani, and Tiarini. A statue of alabaster, extended on a monument, attracting the attention of the duke, he was informed it was that of the first duke of Milan, the founder of the convent.

"If the duke will remain till the morrow," said the prior, "the story of Francisco Sforza, whose tomb is next, may beguile the hours of evening."

Lorenzo, who had determined to pass Pavia, its air being considered deleterious, consented; and after a sumptuous supper of game, confectionary, and fruit, the elder monks, who were men of considerable birth, joined the prior in adjourning to a lesser appartment,

where, at Lorenzo's request, he related the rise of fortune in a peasant's son.

" In the year 1369 Giovanni Galeazzo reigned Duke of Milan, and by his military talents restored peace to Italy. The sciences of tranquil times flourished in his days; over fields of former carnage, agriculture spread the veil of nature; where the armed vessel was used to depart, the full sails of commerce arrived, fraught with riches, and spreading prosperity. His voice aroused the arts, his generosity supported their professors, and his accomplishments led to taste.

" Galeazzo's son had formed early in life a connection with a Piedmontese lady by whom he had a daughter. Her mother dying at her birth, Maria was sent to a house of the Duke's, four leagues from Milan, where the first masters of the times instructed her in every

accomplishment. Her father doated on her with a fondness knowing no bounds of indulgence. Naturally of a haughty spirit, the lady, surrounded by domestics who flattered her foibles with servility, accepted the adulation, at the instant the bestower excited her contempt.

" It was usual with her to visit, attended by her servants, the abodes of the neighbouring peasantry, and enjoy from the timid and humble minds of inferiors to receive adulation. In one of her walks she reached the house of a peasant who had newly occupied it, expecting from its inhabitants the servile respect of others. A youth leaned at the door, employed in cutting slender branches into a rude lattice for vines. He was dressed in the common garb of a countryman; but Maria, casting her eyes on his figure, and the fine contour of his animated countenance, was re-

minded of the Greek forms of sculpture, and the faces of the Italian school. His inattention to her appearance piqued her pride; and desiring one of her attendants to inform him the Duke of Milan's grand-daughter approached, she observed with wonder the slight inclination of his head, and the eagerness with which he returned to his employment, without an expression of wonder at her beauty, or awe of her elevation. Turning from him with disdain, she entered the cottage, and saw a scene where poverty struggled with disease, to overcome worth. The effort was unsuccessful; and the peasant, on whom the hand of heaven pressed, looked up in resigned hope and uncomplaining fortitude. The heart of Maria was touched; she forgot the distance between the wretched being she addressed, and her late vaunted rank. Her eye sparkled

not with the consciousness of superiority; humanity dimmed its lustre; and if she remembered her title, it was but to scatter the gold it gave to her disposal, on the couch of the unhappy.

"'You are good---you are beautiful!' exclaimed the peasant boy, kneeling at her feet. Maria looked with surprise on the speaker;---it was the youth who had beheld her an instant before with the apathy she imputed to imbecility.

"'Rise, Francisco,' exclaimed the suffering father; "insult not the daughter of Giovanni Galeazzo with the attitude of a slave."

"Maria mused as she returned, on the mind which could bestow that homage to a virtuous action it denied to power. She called for her cazel; and in sketching the head of Antoninus, unconsciously delineated the features of the peasant boy.

"Often the steps of the haughty beauty trod the lowly path to Francisco's abode. His father recovered; and Maria's generosity rendered his life easy. His gratitude was evinced in every humble shape chance afforded. Maria excelled in painting flowers from natural subjects; Sforza understanding their culture, appropriated a greater part of his garden to the rearing of the first orders of Flora, tributes of gratitude, which he daily sent to the abode of his benefactress. Maria received them; but wondered Francisco, who had thought her so good, so beautiful, did not convey them to her hand. The youth came not, till it became known her intercession with the duke had obtained the pardon of ten criminals, who, though loaded with dishonour, were beloved; and in whose cause the despairing wife and moaning child sent forth the heart-

rending cry of distress. It was the day of Maria's triumph :---pressing through the applauding multitude, Francisco kissed the edge of her garment, with the respect a slave bestows on sovereignty. Maria understood the impulse. 'Surely," thought she, "this peasant possesses elevation of thought, nobility of action!---through him I am acquainted with myself. When I banish the follies and idle vanities of my character, and become the friend of the miserable, Francisco approaches me.'

"The attendants of Maria wondered at the change in the disposition of their mistress; no longer insulting to inferiors, she received them with kindness and aid. Francisco now daily brought the flowers of his garden; and admitted, through the condescension of his mistress, to her converse, evinced a brilliant and elevated understanding. Maria pre-

vailed on her grandfather to patronise him, and six years after the interview at the cottage, was privately married to the peasant's son. On the death of Giovanni, the enterprising youth acquired the dukedom; and his descendants, remarkable for steady judgment and cool courage, have possessed greater influence over Italian politics than any family but that of Sforza ever attained. Over the hut of Francisco's father, Giovanni Galeazzo built this convent, for the order of the Carthusians."

Lorenzo, though not greatly interested by the story of Francisco, felt indebted to the prior, when, presenting him a letter on parting, he informed him it was addressed to his brother, a man of great medical skill resident at Turin, to whose professional attention he had recommended Sebastian.

Passing rapidly through Genoa and

Milan, Lorenzo beheld with enraptured eye the approach to the city where he had fixed to remain during summer; the rich plains of Piedmont, the range of Appenines, the winding Po, the gay confusion of village towns and fortresses, amongst whose varieties Turin reared its charming city, and the Alps, in towering grandeur, mingled in sublimity and beauty.

Lorenzo, anxious for the recovery of a child, endeared to him by the misfortune of his parents, his winning and affectionate manners, and the dawnings of a fine genius, evinced in his remarks on the *chef d'œuvres* of talent his protector led him to survey during their route to Turin, delayed not on his arrival presenting to the learned and skilful Merezza the letter of his brother; and, in this introduction, the duke not only secured to Sebastian the attentions

of a man, before whose skill his lingering complaints gradually gave way, but attained himself a friendship that gave pleasure equally to the man of science and benevolent feeling.

Lorenzo, since the commencement of his journey, had regularly, at Carlotta's desire, written his remarks on the changing objects of his tour: this the count requested, as well to mark the progress of the duke's mental recovery, as to secure him from relapsing at evening into melancholy the varieties of the day might have diverted; and, in the closet, or the solitary inn, return to scenes once painful to remembrance. An extract, written shortly after Lorenzo's arrival at Turin, will best express his feelings on such topics as were not forbidden ones in the correspondence.

"I have engaged a residence in the

environs of this beautiful city, situated on the junction of the tributary Stoura with the Po; their united though unequal streams water a terrace, from whence the prospect of vineyards, groves, and gardens spread in rich profusion; a small range of chesnut-covered hills seem to bend their foliaged heads before the distant majesty of the snow-covered Alpines.---Here Rochemelon rises, first of the awful range, and towering above in grandeur, surveys the recumbent

"Goddess of the plains."

"My establishment is plain; but such as is best calculated to allow of leisure to survey the many treasures Turin boasts the possession of, whether in literature, the arts, or the sciences; embracing the manuscripts of Pliny and

Dante, the works of the Flemish school, and a museum rich with antiques, medals, and discoveries of utility to society.

" I must not omit, whilst pointing out objects interesting to myself, to inform you, Sebastian is an infant Linnæus. Our mulberry trees are plundered to supply stores for the insect army that have been removed from the garden to my study; the sweet boy surveys them with the eager glance of enquiry, but his grasp is that of feeling, extending to the most minute of the species.---I cannot say as much for his consideration to the

" Floral deities;"

whole beds of flowers are rudely torn from the gardens, and deck my library; and here I sit during sultry hours, my

attention only drawn from my studies by the exclamations of my young friend; as he discovers some novelty in a butterfly or flower, or reproaches a captive with its attempts to fly from an imprisonment, rendered so pleasurable by his cares. I seize the moment to impress Sebastian with the rights possessed by the meanest object in creation; and whilst he trembles at his infringement of them, forbear to damp his spirit of discovery, by the information, that his late remarks have been the written truths of a century. After all, my dear count, considering the understanding, as years give it strength of capacity, Sebastian's observations may honour the boy as much as those of the greatest naturalist in existence have done the man.

" I have written you of Merezza.---It is in a man's house a just estimation can be formed of his character;---the love of

his dependents marking humanity, the visits of scientific friends denoting understanding, and the social hours that unveil the mind, all contribute to fix opinion at its most just point. The house of this amiable man is situated near my own, and this circumstance led me to my choice. A walk, sweetly sheltered, communicates with both gardens, winding by the river side in devious mazes to meet the lofty spreading chesnut, the rich mulberry, or the tender vine. Sebastian, lured by the caresses of his kind physician, carries swiftly along this path every object he thinks worthy his friend's attention; thus a constant communication is kept up between us. Merezza has no family; but he adopts the unfortunate, and thus becomes the father of many.

"In mentioning you, my dear count, I spoke of traits of similarity; and re-

gretted, that like you, he had not a wife as amiable as the countess, a daughter as worthy of estimation as your Julia! From his answer I learn, that death depriving him in youth of an affianced bride, he had not sought again from woman, love! Merezza, even in age, possesses the ardent feelings that mark the fires of youth.---He has lost the object of his first love!---yet is he happy!--- His discourse leads to gaiety; and his composed mein and tranquil hours speak of peace. A few months back, I believed such deprivation---such calm, incompatible with nature!

.....

" Sebastian has seen a lady at Marezza's, whose attentions have drawn him from his philosophical enquiries. Already are his collections strewn on the floor of my library; the spangled lizard escaped to the trees, the butterfly spread

its admired wing, and the roses faded; the hand that imprisoned the one, and refreshed the other, is clasped in a woman's, and my little truant follows her steps in every haunt!---Believe me, I have blushed at this epitome of self! let me not advert to the sigh that accompanied the feeling of shame!

"Sebastian presses me to behold the object of his new devotion; 'So beautiful, so kind, so interesting, and so ill!' are his words.---Poor fellow! he has heard me unite the latter claim to affection with the former, in his own case, and imagines them inseparable.----I would avoid strangers;---what is woman henceforth to me!

"Merezza has just urged me to pass the evening with his patient and her family, an aged father and doating husband.---Such a scene! the parent and the lover hovering over an angel pre-

pared for flight, can present no ideas injurious to melancholy!---I have consented to thank the Countess Alteri for her attentions to my cherished boy.

" I have returned, my dear Count, from passing an evening whose hours of converse mingled more of feeling and mind than any I remember ever to have passed. Alas! why are not they ever thus?---Knowledge rejects the charms of sensibility; feeling delights in the banishment of prudence:---where they unite, how the sorrows of life flee before the one---how the joys of eternity open to the other! In our delightful Sicily the tree puts forth its fragrant blossom, its ripened fruit, and its promise of future, together:---why should the mind invidiously insist on its season of love, prudence, or religion?---might they not blend, each more beautiful from its associate?

"The Count Alteri is a young and handsome man, of manners that would partake of too much gravity for society, did not the happiness of another call the beam of satisfaction to his fine features. Who, on following the direction of his constant eye, could forbear to wonder why no smile arose for his own joy?---His wife, trembling on the brink of life, pale as the most unsullied sculpture, half reclining in the arms of her venerable father, seems but to linger in compassion to their sorrow. How every change of her hectic cheek calls the father and husband's eyes to Merezza!---He gives hopes it would be cruel to withhold.

"This amiable family have arrived but a few weeks; they reside with the physician, to seek whom they have left their home. His prescription is, wandering about his gardens, and a diet composed

wholly of fruit. The countess does not appear handsome. It is long since I have looked on beauty:---I could date its disappearance from my horizon; but alas! I pursue it where it moulders!--- its graces no longer animated---its bloom fled as a vision!---The voice of the invalid alone interests me. Do we not often start at the tones of sweet and melancholy music; remembering other days, and recalled by the vibration of the heart to hours when a voice as tremulous, as tender, struck the chords of feeling:---then turning away, mourn over the truth, that the strain is closed---the voice silenced for ever!---No more of this.

"I cannot refuse Sebastian to the countess's entreaty:---she passes the hours of night in more composure from the idea of meeting him in the morning--- of sitting in the arbour he has assisted

to weave, and tasting the fruit he gathers. The count seems to consider our meeting as ordained by heaven, and is with me every day to express his gratitude. He is very amiable; and did not grief cloud his mind, unquestionably possesses brilliant talent. I almost doubt the justice of individual feeling so completely absorbing the qualities of the mind.---Soft!---am I not using your language, respected Carlotta---am I not forgetting on what occasion such remonstrances were used?"

CHAPTER XII.

" Fortune, her gifts may variously dispose,
" And these be happy call'd;—unhappy those:
" But Heav'ns just balance equal will appear,
" While those are plac'd in hope, and these in
" fear."

The duke soon became intimate with the amiable strangers; the residence of Merezza, and that of himself, were the alternate scene of their meetings; and as the countess recovered from the fatigue of her journey, her relatives caught at hope with something of past pleasure.

One evening, the party assembled in Merezza's garden; and as the gentlemen grouped round the countess, her

arm clasped Sebastian's neck, as fondly he sat beside her; or releasing him, her eye followed his movements, as with the alacrity of an attendant sylph he flew to execute her slightest wish.

"My boy recovers, daily," observed the duke, as he gazed with delight on the active strength with which Sebastian climbed the orange trees.

"You may be assured," replied Merezza; "his complaint is eradicated:---during a residence of some years at Venice I became acquainted with the nature of those deleterious drugs, and have ever found medicinal herbs their antidote."

Alteri, deeply sighing, fixed his eyes on his wife;---her cheek flushed, her lips fluttered with agitation.

"I beseech you," cried he, "pursue this subject no farther; it interests us

more nearly than you can conceive.---My love," said the count, "retire!"

Slowly leaning on her favourite, the countess walked into the adjoining alley, where, whilst Sebastian plucked the pendent clusters of the grape, he bribed her with kisses to take their restorative juices.

"Is not Sebastian your son, my lord?" exclaimed the elder count; "you term him so; but an hour since he talked most unintelligibly on the subject: you may believe I waved it," added he, "as supposing some mystery you wished concealed."

"Sebastian's story cannot be made too public," cried the duke; "I reproach myself for suffering months, years, to waste without advancing in an enquiry I have pledged myself to pursue. It occurs to me, that a relation of

the circumstances that more particularly attach to the history of this unfortunate child, may, perhaps, interest you, through your various connections, to further my search after his family, more particularly his maternal grandfather, the Count Rossarno."

The old man, catching his arm, gazed at him in speechless astonishment; and bidding his son guard the countess from approaching the spot, thus addressed him:---

"If you can, my lord, communicate to Rossarno, that one of his unfortunate daughter's children survives the tide of calamity that swept every innocent from her bosom, I bid you speak, even though the withered heart of age should burst at the admission of the joy."

The duke listened to the venerable man; he attended to the proofs he adduced of his being the unfortunate father

of Florida, and hesitated not to confide to him Leone's story.

" Providential meeting!" exclaimed Rossarno; " who will henceforth dash the cup of life from their pallid lip?---who will accuse Heaven?---Even in the chances of an hour," cried he, lifting up his hands in adoration; " sorrow is removed, and virtue triumphs over calamity!"

Lorenzo remembered, as the stranger spoke, the rebellion of his own heart, and shuddered alike with compunction and hope.

" Come forth, Alfrido," cried the aged father; " lead hither the object of your care;---a son survives, and beckons Florida from her opening tomb."

" Not only a son, my father," exclaimed the count, as Lorenzo concluded his narrative; " not only a son, but a brother! may Heaven pardon my

sins, as in this moment his offences are obliterated from my mind!---Say," exclaimed he, addressing the lily on his arm; "speak, Florida; does our hearts admit Leone?"

Dropping on her knees the angel, purified by her near approach to Heaven from all mortal resentments, and breathing the mercy she implored, prayed, the joy of that moment might be partaken by him who had caused her misfortunes,---her life prolonged to welcome and bless him!"

"Talk not of death," cried Merezza, "at the moment life throws off its varied veil, and brighter scenes appear.---Come," clasping the mother and the child; "I must lead you from this scene.---Remain, count; frighten not this fluttering breath from its clay:---I would remove Sebastian from your wife, but fear her incredulity for his existence.

"Tell me," exclaimed the duke, "how the grave on which Leone wept has given up the dead---why the murdered Alfrido again breathes in light and life?"

"Your narrative concludes my story," said Alfrido, "from the night when a brother's arm sought my destruction, and weltering in my blood I lay in the portico of St. Stephano. The providence of Heaven directed the Count Rossarno to the spot. He sought the prior concerning the admission of a monk; and, alarmed at the groans that struck on his ear, came with the brothers to my assistance. I was taken into the monastery, and languished many months. The seclusion of the spot, the nightly visits of Florida and her father, gave no room to murder to doubt its purpose was accomplished. On my recovery, the plans each suggested for future safety were weighed. A fate seemed to pursue us; and we

resolved to fly the spot where calamity had drained our cup to bitter dregs; and, with the wreck of our family, seek, under feigned names, a distant abode. My faded Florida had borne during my illness another child, on whom the dews of pestilence shortly distilled its baneful poison. We started at the dreadful hues that overspread its cheek;---no time was to be lost!---my brother fled---my children destroyed,---I had Florida and her father to save, and for their sakes lived myself. The funeral ordered by the count was followed by the absence of our child!---none knew its fate!---The storm approached, and we fled from its fury. My Florida's father purchased estates in Corsica; from whence we derive the title of Alteri. The anguish attending our exile can only be known to ourselves; surely, no other heart can conceive our sorrow;---no other fate has

been similar! Thus, my lord, have we accounted for the appearance of those on whom the grave was said to have closed. What thanks can repay, what life be prolonged, to utter our gratitude to you, preserver and protector of our child!"

Sebastian now was Florida's; no apprehension arose of their separation, and clasped to her bosom, his innocent breath was balm to her slumbers. Merezza watched over both; shed on their united heads the restoratives of nature, led their steps to bowers shaded from the oppressive sun, or bade them emerge from its retreat, when Hygeia tempered the morning breeze or evening's departing breath. The flowers revived day after day.---Hope threw another sweet in Alfrido's path; he heard from Merezza of Florida's safety, and consecrated the hour to his pardoned brother.

"Return, Leone!" were his words; "return to Alfrido and his bride! Let the horrible visions of the past flee from the returning light.---I rescue an adored wife from the grave---you, a brother!---The hour demands a rich sacrifice to the reviving deity!---let us lay on the altar of his mercy all past recollections;---be our offences and our suspicions buried in the vacated tombs! Oh, Leone! my heart yearns over my brother; in imagination Florida extends her arms in her slumbers; she lifts her child to your embrace, and confides it to your care! Far from us be the terrifying images of the past;---Heaven smiles on us, let us smile on each other!"

Lorenzo's detailed account of Rossarno's narrative accompanied Alfrido's letter; both were inclosed to Carlotta, whom the duke entreated for Leone.

"Could his pardon be obtained,"

urged Lorenzo; " his honour aroused to quit his ignominious profession, here might he again enjoy the sweets of life."

CHAPTER XIII.

" Fear not now affliction's power,
" Fear not now wild passion's rage;
" Nor fear ye aught in evil hour,
" Save the tardy hand of age."

Months rolled on their rapid course, and Florida gained health and joy. Rossarno determined to return to Calabria, and once more taste of social happiness, in the abodes of his fathers and the intercourse of many valued friends, to whom his virtues were dear, and who had mourned his alienation from them. Neither did Alfrido and his lovely wife hesitate to accompany him. The weeds that had overgrown their paradise were removed, and again the

former haunts of love bloomed in recollection. Their hearts received him from whom they had winged their apprehensive flight; and viewing Sebastian, unavailing tears ceased to drop on their buried offspring. Lorenzo, from the story of his friends acquired instruction. He admitted the voice of reason to pierce his ear; his eye dwelt on its page: and this one long rejected guest admitted to his privacy, how quickly did the heart advance in its cure!

Alfrido, though admitted not to the secret of his friend's dejection and absence from scenes of pleasure,---though he penetrated not the groves of Ischia, or heard the mournful murmur of its surrounding waves, as they sighed near Rosolia's unconsecrated grave, delicately drew Lorenzo from retirement, and urged him to a participation of his pleasurable plans, whose basis were the re-

novation of the countess:----together they spread the light sail, and wafted along the winding Po, sketched the ruins scattered among the mountainous hollows, or resting on their oars, listened to the vesper hymn of some distant convent, wafted by the gale whose breath

"Stolen from orange bowers,"

partook alike of music and fragrance.

The sounds of religious harmony conveyed a thousand mingled emotions to Lorenzo's bosom. His heart shrunk from the plaintive sweetness, the pathetic pathos of the tones;---again the rising sound elevating the idea to the heaven addressed, expanded it with feelings he would not have exchanged for pleasure.

Lorenzo, as a catholic, had made reparation to the shrines of the offended

saints: the *Religieuse* forbore to question as they received the riches of Verdura. Remembering the wish Rosolia had felt of associating with the gentle nuns of St. Agatha, the Duke loaded their convent with presents. Thus far the forms of his religion were observed; but the humbled and penitent spirit with which he approached the altar, was more acceptable, and its offering repaid by a calm tranquillity gradually returning on his hours, gave assurance of the "pure incense" having arisen.

Sebastian, remembering the tender care of Julia, and the kind associates of Carlotta's family, would speak of his instructress and her lovely sisters, with a warmth that awoke Alfrido's attention. His wife, who felt her heart expand to every bosom that had in less happy hours sheltered her forsaken boy, was minute in her enquiries concerning

the gentle Julia; and believing from the innocent prattle of her child, that Lorenzo was not an object of indifference to her, since Sebastian spoke of grief and joy, and linked these emotions with Lorenzo's fate, introduced the subject by enquiring of the duke if Julia merited the strong encomiums her loved boy lavished on her?

The duke, who, as his fiercer passions retired, felt the milder virtues advance, in those forms he beheld them when introduced an orphan and a stranger to Carlotta's roof, he first gazed on the charming groupe his family presented, answered hesitatingly, "Julia is superior to my praise. I have, madam, doated on beauty, and given the admiration such women as Carlotta's daughter might have inspired, to another, as innocent, as engaging,---but so different,

they seem too far removed to admit my describing the object of your enquiry."

"The daughter of Count Carlotta is not then a beauty?" said Florida.

"Imagine an expressive countenance and graceful form," said the duke; "even the studies of Julia seem to give a character to her person, *that of virtue.*"

"Your eulogium is more expressive than you imagine," said Alfrido, smiling.

"Why will you not return to Palermo," cried Sebastian, as he climbed up the duke's knee and innocently consulted his eyes; "Why will you not return to be loved by the count, by his lady, and to be loved by Julia?"

"Never!" exclaimed Lorenzo, (disengaging himself gently from his grasp, and leaving the apartment) "never," cried he mentally, "till I am recalled by Carlotta!"

Faithful to his resolution, Lorenzo

witnessed the departure of his friends for Calabria, without suffering his mind to dwell on the desire he felt of return. Their expressions of gratitude and friendship affected his heart; but he suppressed the acknowledgment of his emotion, lest the stern friend who had banished him, should prolong his exile, from the belief that the ardent emotions of youth remained in their original force.

Mistaken Lorenzo! Carlotta but awaited the hour when his pupil could enter the Verdura palace with honour, tread the shades of Bagaria without sorrow.

The departure of the venerable Rossarno and his family left a void in the hours of the duke, that induced him to leave Turin; and to this step he was the more induced, as Merezza spent every year three months at Rome, and

the period of his departure now arrived. Together the friends travelled towards this vast ruin of departed greatness, stopping occasionally to satisfy the curiosity of the duke, or to pay a tribute of friendship to Merezza's friends.

Lorenzo spent some days at the convent near Pavia, and had an opportunity of contrasting the brothers, in a view highly favourable to the lesson implanted in his mind by the parting words of the Count Carlotta :---both men of talent and education, the Merezzas had chosen situations in which the understanding of the one, confined by monastic rules, his benevolence cramped by the limits of his intercourse, and his mental endowments wasted on the study of the fathers, admitted no return to the general good. His brother, on the contrary, though the disappointment of his first passion might have been sup-

posed to urge him to a life of seclusion, had struggled with his feelings in youth, and overcome them in more advanced life; his skill and his humanity rendered him beneficial to the society of which, as a member, he owed a tribute of talent. Lorenzo decided his friend had judged rightly, and his vow to the count hazarded no danger in being broken.

Relating to the worthy physician, on leaving the convent, the story of Maria Sforza, as told him on a former visit, by the prior, Merezza smiled. "The colouring is rather warm," cried he, "for the pencil of a Franciscan; and the relation perhaps considered a compliment to the founder of the convent, in whose favour a few deviations from the main story may have been made. Were I to pronounce what class of people were most calculated for the writing of ro-

mances, I should say those who, removed from the truths of every day occurrences, have most scope for the illusions of fancy:---the visions of St. Theresa are a convincing proof of the assertion."

"Were this the case," cried Lorenzo, "attempting to jest on a subject which he felt press heavy on his foibles, the flowery studies of Maria may derive their origin from the *vino amabile*, of which the good Franciscans we have left possess such abundance:---seriously I acquiesce in your judgment; an overheated imagination, catching at the marvellous, with exceeding sensibility, are undoubtedly the groundworks of romance, and the character of the recluse."

The duke, on entering Rome, felt indescribable emotion. Here his mother had passed the years of her exile,

his infancy had been reared; and hither he returned, with altered fortunes.---Stealing from Merezza, he bent over Leonora's tomb, in filial piety invoking the spirit whose mortal hours were employed in supporting his infancy, to look down and bless the son who mourned over her ashes.

Some days after, standing in the square of the Capitol, he pointed out the fine colossal statue of Marcus Aurelius to Merezza. "How often," said he, "has a mother directed my eye to that noble object---how often mingled discourse of the emperor with praise of the masterly style in which his likeness is delineated!'

Rome, full of objects awakening the like recollections, was pleasing to the feelings of the duke. He sought the humble roof where his mother had resided; and finding from the story of its

present inhabitants that Love retired from the altar of Hymen, unable to combat poverty, he bestowed a portion on the daughter of a worthy father; and in the blessing of the lovers felt a pleasure in wealth.

Lorenzo had now the means of fulfilling the wishes of a heart naturally overflowing with benevolence. The superfluities of the Verdura palace, all its tribute to ostentation, in which the arts had no share, were disposed of, as well as some estates in the vicinity of Naples. Thus Lorenzo relieved his title from the burthens imposed by his uncle's extravagance.

The environs of Rome considered by strangers as gloomy and too thickly strewn with antiquities to admit of more than rapid observation, were endeared to Lorenzo; and Merezza, finding his attention continually occupied, left him

to ramble at will. Often taking a volume whose lessons were salutary to his feelings, he would stray through the extensive and beautiful gardens of the Borghese, and throwing himself beneath the sheltering foliage of oaks and laurel, study the poet or the historian; at others, gazing on the dilapidated temples, the statues, and the arches through which the proud triumphs of conquerors were wont to pass, retrace in rapid thought the history of ancient Rome, or at the font of Egeria, muse on the virtues of the wise Numa.

Three years had passed over Lorenzo since the death of Rosolia; her memory, though cherished by him with that tenderness of thought her love and unfortunate fate inspired, did not, as it were wont, rise to awaken despair. The correspondence of Carlotta, the friendship of Merezza, withdrew his mind from the

visions that would drive it to the verge of enthusiasm. In fine, when the count wrote, urging his return, he felt he could enter Sicily, and meet Carlotta with an assurance that the objects of his exile, that of obtaining resignation and tranquillity of thought, were accomplished.

Lorenzo arrived by a circuitous route at Reggio, and from thence embarked for Palermo. The evening was advanced as Carlotta met him, and pressed him to his abode.

The duke grasped his hand with emotion: "To-morrow," exclaimed he; "to-morrow I will see the countess; this night, perhaps, it is best I should collect the confused thoughts that assault me, on a return to a home marked by the most affecting incidents of my life."

Left alone in the palace of Verdura,

Lorenzo had leisure to contemplate an alteration, scarce less than time and reflection had wrought on himself: whereever riches triumphed over taste, the hand of Carlotta had removed the adornment; a chaste simplicity of style pervaded every apartment; and through the garden every luxuriance of sweet was either trained to sheltering shade, or twined with sombre foliage, giving and receiving charms by the contrast.

From the room in which the duke retired to repose, the luxurious subjects of the Heathen mythology had retired; giving place to busts of men famed for virtue and heroism, or paintings rich with representations elevating to the understanding. Their influence gave colour to Lorenzo's dreams; scarce had he sunk in slumber, than fancy brought to his pillow visions mingling the form of past love with the voice of present rea-

son.---A soft ethereal mist seemed to envelope every object, a tremulous agitation pervaded his frame; and, gazing on the light clouds that rose from the pavement, he awaited the coming of a spirit. Slowly rising from the marble chasm, a veiled figure, habited as a nun, drawing back her sacred lawn, disclosed the features of Rosolia. Lorenzo seemed to bend before the regretted shade, with past adoration and mingled terror.---"Speak!" cried he; "if the secrets of the grave can break on mortal ear, if spirits can commune with man, what is the doom of those who disregard all but the impulse of passion?---what the fate Rosolia has encountered, that Lorenzo must endure?---Say, shadowy visitant, what masses can consign thy troubled soul to repose?---what expiation be made for error?"

"Listen!" replied a sweet but solemn voice; "every virtuous deed of thine, Lorenzo, will more avail than all the incense of altars!---Seek another; nor let the remembrance of my broken vow remain: the crime ceases not while this unhallowed fire burns over the coldness of my ashes!"

"Oh, Rosolia!" exclaimed the appalled listener; "could I believe you were received in mercy, then might I feel resignation, and this fire be extinguished; but I tremble in doubt, and no second love can arise mingled with its terrors!"

"Behold!" cried the ascending saint, pointing to the separating clouds that arose round her head, and seemed to disclose the abodes of bliss.

Lorenzo's uplifted eyes beheld *expiation* written on the cross;---his suppli-

cating arms implored her stay; but, dispersing as the shadowy mists of a summer's eve beneath a setting glory, the beauteous spirit melted into air.

CHAPTER XIV.

" But virtue, more engaging all the while,
" Disclos'd new charms; more lovely, more serene,
" Beaming sweet influence, a milder smile
" Soften'd the terrors of her lofty mien.
" ' Lead, goddess! I am thine!' transported, cried
" Alcides; ' Oh, propitious pow'r! thy way
" Teach me; possess my soul; be thou my guide;
" From thee, O never, never, let me stray!'
" While ardent thus the youth his vows address'd,
" With all the goddess fill'd, already glow'd his
" breast."

On the ensuing day the duke visited the abode of Carlotta. Florida and the countess reposed in the portico; their eyes constantly recurring to Leone and his brother, who, grasping each other's hands with feelings such as " glowed in

youth," seemed to dread lest fate should again part them. Carlotta leaned over them, his eye yet beaming with the benevolence which animated it, as he read them, Alfrido's prayer in favour of Leone had been accepted by the throne.

Lorenzo's heart admitted the scene to its inmost recess; it presented a balm by which the wounds, whether of passion or grief, were allayed. Welcomed by every individual of this interesting groupe with joy and gratulation, the duke turned to where Julia reclined; no sound of friendship had proceeded from her lip, no recognition of esteem had she bestowed, and timidly fearing the suffusion of her cheek should withdraw the veil from her passion, her modesty had scarcely raised to the view of her solitary thoughts, she received with averted eyes his salute.

Fixing his regards on her, the duke

beheld with approval the improvement of her graceful person; five years had elapsed, since on his departure for Naples, (ere the roses and thorns of love had been together grasped by his venturous hand), he had bade her the farewell of esteem.

Carlotta endeavoured to divert the attention of the duke from his daughter, who now ventured to cast the timid glance of her modest eye on the object of her secret love. His renovated health, and a vivacity she had never before witnessed in his manner, inspired her with joy. "It is the result of indifference," thought she; "recovered from his first love, his strengthened mind will never admit another; but Lorenzo is happy, and Julia has requested no other favour of heaven."

The visits of the Duke became frequent; and Florida and her husband

observing the growing partiality of their friend for the amiable Sicilian, encouraged the infant love. Lorenzo shortly gazed on Julia till the expression of her features seemed beauteous, the symmetry of her form alluring; yet from Lorenzo's mind such attractions would have faded, had not sweetness of disposition, solidity of judgment, and the charms of her accomplished mind, linked the flowery chain. At every parting Lorenzo felt more strongly the desire of return, till inclination, reason, and virtue united to bid him demand Julia of her father.

"Dear, yet stern mentor," pleaded the altered Lorenzo; "to you I owe the feeling that induces my preference of virtue; to you, that I return to Verdura with a heart chilled to the excesses of passion. If my struggle has been successful, think not

it has been atchieved without pain, or that I can consent to remain without reward. I seek it in such ties as may banish the past from the danger of disturbing repose; give me Julia in that valued gift!---Will you ensure my future safety? I prefer her to all that live of women; nor can her who has fled, rise, even in memory, to haunt abodes hallowed by her stay."

Carlotta received the duke's declaration with emotion; the youth, whose steps he had gradually followed with the support of precept, whose errors he pardoned, even against the dictates of his religious tenets, now demanded of him a daughter whose virtue shed a glory on the setting of his life. Knowing Lorenzo, might he not hesitate?---perhaps Heaven ordained, that in his own person he should feel the punishment of broken engagements, the misery of hal-

lowed, but severed bonds! Brighter thoughts succeeded; his bosom opened to the reclaimed wanderer, and, addressing him with serious tenderness, he replied:---

"If Julia admits your merits, my lord, I will not hesitate to lay this last stake, more precious to me than life, on your character. I accompany my gift but with one condition; my daughter believes Rosolia to have perished at Syracuse: never let the dreams of Ischia disturb her repose; never, Lorenzo, let her hesitate between your love and that of Heaven! Hard is it to reconcile the odium attached to crime, and the affection borne the perpetrator. I have done so; but never let one who will look up to you as her example, have the trial!---Seek Julia," added Carlotta; "on her decision rests your fate."

The duke, hastily leaving the count,

sought his mistress in the study, to which she had retired with her sisters; and, twining her arms round their light forms, gracefully mingled caresses with instruction. She blushed as Lorenzo advanced towards her, and bent her regards on the objects of her care.

The duke pleaded his passion with manly fervour, and left Julia with the certainty of being beloved. The countess, pressing her daughter to her heart, remembered, (as she contemplated the flutterings that arose from her timid bosom at Lorenzo's words, and marked the alternate rose and lily rest on Julia's cheek) the hours of her youth; and as she sealed her forehead with the pure lip of maternal love, with uplifted eyes, prayed that all the blessings of her marriage might descend to her child.

Alfrido and his fair partner saw every wish they had formed accomplished:

already Leone felt the corroding passions, the retrospective horrors of his bosom dispelled by scenes where innocence and virtue spread the milder influence of their reign. The interest of his friends, particularly the venerable Rossarno, had accomplished their desired aim with the court of Naples; that of obtaining an oblivion of the Calabrian's offence, and his admission to his former privileges. To this the church offered no obstacle; Leone's hands had been embrued with no blood, save that which now flowed in a renovated current, in the bosom that glowed with pity and affection towards him. His change of name greatly facilitated the intention Rossarno had formed of representing him, in his native country, as returned from a distant tour. It was decided by his brother, that Leone should reside with him at his estate near Reggio.

"So many blessings have been unexpectedly returned to us, my Florida," said the idolizing husband; "so rich a compensation given for misfortunes, that we can venture to return to those scenes; and our poor wanderer, our penitent Leone, shall call forth the thankfulness of of our hearts to that Power, who has recalled him from disgrace to honour, from hatred to love: and let us hope," said he, "extending his hand, "Leone, that either a Florida or a Julia may exist, whose soft influence will unite with ours to divert your thoughts from sorrow, and through whom many other ties may be formed to bind this knot of reunion yet firmer."

Carlotta, on whose generous nature repentant sorrow had ever a claim, united with this amiable pair in consolations to one who now loved them in the proportion he had once hated; who

could not forgive himself former injustice, and amid whose cheerful hours, fits of abstracted thought denoted that he felt, and that deeply.

The palace of Verdura now opened its gates to social pleasures, to gay and lively groupes, to females of virtue, and men of accomplishment. The duke, from whose countenance its last cloud had passed, felt again, in the joys of friendship, the delights of love; his Julia, surrounded by her beloved relatives, gliding through the stately edifice, the flagrant gardens of his abode, seemed the genius at whose smile care and vice withdrew. Nor did Carlotta's villa yield no pleasure to those for whom the more splendid mansion unfolded its gates; sweet were the evening hours passed beneath its simple portico; the converse held within its classic roof, the wisdom of Rossarno and Carlotta, the livelier and

more animated discourse of Alfrido and Lorenzo, the softer graces of eloquence displayed by the females of their love, obliterated all traces of the midnight masks, the banquets of Verdura.

Julia and her wedded friend were greatly attached; both approached important events, such as the prospect of awakens, in minds of sensibility, a thousand varying charms, a thousand tender feelings:---Florida, to the unspeakable joy of her friends, promised again to be a mother; the Providence who had so deeply afflicted her youth, beholding with approval the calm resignation, the gentle passiveness with which she meekly bowed to the storm, gave again the treasures of her bosom. She believed her future offspring would resemble those on whom a mother's remembrance had often dwelt, and resolved to bestow on them the names her tongue had de-

lighted to repeat, and which her buried darlings had borne. Alfrido would fix his anxious eye on her, as sunk into such reveries, a tender tear stole from her eye and met the smile of her lip: he understood the mingled feeling, and brought Sebastian to her knee and embrace. The sweet boy, in a low voice, would whisper his hopes concerning his expected relative; "A companion to me, if a brother," said the affectionate child; "but far dearer should it be a sister, whom I would love and protect."

Sebastian, in the endearments of his relatives, forgot not Lorenzo; but tenderly attached, hung on his words, and regarded his lessons.

If Florida, trembling with alternate fear and hope, presented an object of interest to the loved groupe, Julia, the tender, the modest Julia, no less partook

the emotion, and shared the tribute. From the moment she was assured the happiness of Lorenzo was consigned to her love, anxiety to add a charm or blessing to the existence of that beloved object, mingled with a consciousness the praises of a father had taught. The duke again opened Verdura to the Sicilian noblesse. How changed was the scene its walls presented!---no avaricious gamester sought aggrandisement at the expence of one he falsely termed friend; sad mockery of his ruin!---no artful and meretricious woman glanced on timid beauty with basalisk eye, or lured unsuspecting youth to Circean bowls or canopied bowers:---music awoke to other strains, pointing to other forms; eloquence to more ennobling themes.

Julia had received from nature the gift of verse; in youth her father had waved her from the flowery path, to

which he now again directed her steps. "You owe," said he, "every talent to the husband of your choice; and as, my child, the hours of life, however represented, call even on the most happy to aid their flight, and smooth their progress by the refinements of education, or the gifts of natural endowments; it becomes a duty to cultivate and expand such accomplishments in the social circle. You must learn, Julia, to be considered by man in a variety of relations, as the colour of his thoughts, or the circumstances of the hour may call forth;---as an attached friend in the hour of misfortune, the chaste bride in that of love, the thoughtful counsellor in that of difficulty, the gay and amusive companion in hilarity. Of your mind, my Julia, being fully competent to all the tender yet firm energy requisite for the one, all the delicacy calculated to se-

cure your lasting empire over Lorenzo's heart, I am assured; but however important these may be, forget not, that the latter hour mentioned by me brings with it important consequences. The duke has taste, a certain degree of elegance is his birth-right; disdain not to call in the arts to render his moments more pleasurable; cultivate the verse that in future weaves his name in its wreath; touch the lyre with sounds he loves."

Florida saw with pleasure the effect of Carlotta's discourse on his fair daughter. Julia's form improved by elegance, her voice attained additional sweetness by the practice she now bestowed; and on the duke's natal day her muse presented its offering. The tribute, like the donor, unadorned by the tinsel of shew, or the extreme glare of beauty, was lovely, simple, pleasing, and unaf-

fected. The compliment, though bestowed on him she loved, was so delicately conveyed, so purely expressed, that universal praise met her from those whom most she wished to please. Carlotta praised the judgment of the verses, Lorenzo the feeling, Florida the delicacy; yet even Sebastian saw the love that lurked beneath the lines Julia presented Lorenzo, with the modest grace for which she was distinguished.

The duke saw with pleasure Julia only advanced from the modest retirement in which she had sought hitherto to veil her accomplishments, for his sake; and receiving every tribute affection gave with undissembled feelings, excited her to additional proofs of genius. These offerings beguiled the hours till Rossarno should return from Naples, whither Carlotta had again accompanied him, to

finally receive and witness the royal pardon to Leone.

The counts shortly returned; and Rossarno having accomplished the object of his stay at Naples, came to hasten the departure of the brothers to their long deserted Calabria. This accelerated the nuptials of Lorenzo; who, in the presence of the Sicilian nobility, received, in the church of La Matrice, the hand of Julia:---the tear of a father dropt on it as he gave it; the pressure of Lorenzo's lip effaced it from the snowy tablet,

Through a long and honourable life Lorenzo betrayed not the trust reposed in that hour; and his house, no longer sunk in contempt by the vices or the follies of its representative, attained a pre-eminence as distinguished in virtue as it claimed in rank: the virtues of Julia and Lorenzo descending to their suc-

cessors, rendered the name of Verdura distinguished and beloved through Sicily. Nor did the pleasures refuse their flowery wreath to virtue. The children of Julia sported through the groves of Bagaria, and the smiles of their mother waked Lorenzo to rapture.

Sebastian became the lover of the duke's daughter; and since, the houses of Rossarno and Verdura have formed alliances.

The fate of Rosolia, as believed by rumour, affected the heart of Julia, nor could Lorenzo wave her from her purpose, when, actuated by feelings of pious regret, the beautiful statue of the nun, sculptured by Vani, was presented by her to the church of Mont Pellano. The traveller gazes with admiration on the beauty of the recumbent form, composed of spotless "Parian;" and as the nuns point out the exquisite semblance

of their expiring saint, knows not in the boasted statue he beholds the lovely features, the finished form of *Rosolia of Palermo.*

THE

MALTESE PORTRAIT.

MARTIN TOUTMAIL

THE

MALTESE PORTRAIT.

CHAPTER I.

"Gently withdraw the veil of years,
"Then gaze upon the wrecks of time;
"Beauty with smiles again appears,
"And valour decks the alter'd clime."

"How deserted and desolate these rooms appear!" said Lord Roseville, as he followed the guiding lamps borne by his domestics through the lofty apart-

ment allotted for his use by the Governor of Malta; "my health will not, however, allow of immediately proceeding on my voyage; busy yourself, therefore, Manly," (addressing his servant), "in rendering this abode less dreary."

A sopha was procured; and the invalid reclining on it, watched the efforts made by his attendants towards imparting some degree of comfort to the air of surrounding objects.

"The French commandant, I understand, occupied these quarters," said Manly; "it is no wonder, my lord, that little of the former magnificence of the palace, once, Jacobi informs me, the finest in the island, remains: they could not take the paintings from the cieling," said he, lifting up his lamp, and viewing imperfectly the height; "or the marble from the pavement; but I wonder these pictures were suffered to remain."

The mention of pictures aroused Roseville, who, observing Manly vainly endeavouring to move the ponderous frames that lay in heaps in the corner of the room, desired the rest of his attendants to assist; and (after arranging his travelling bed in an inner apartment,) to place the pictures round the most extensive of the rooms, for his amusement in the morning.

Lord Roseville awoke refreshed, and beheld his anxious domestic seated near his bed, eager to communicate the progress he had made towards his comforts.

"The morning is sultry, my lord," said Manly; "the *sirocco* will not allow of your leaving home; but your breakfast is spread in an apartment cooled by the shade of lattices, and round the sprinkled pavement the servants have

arranged the pictures you were desirous of seeing."

Roseville arose, elated with the prospect of amusement succeeding the dull monotony of a voyage; his wearied spirits had not aroused from Mediterranean calms, to survey his approach to the shores of Malta; even its famed St. Elmo was gazed on languidly, as he hurried towards the palace of Floriane, the preceding evening.

"From whence come these flowers?" said the invalid, as he inhaled the perfume of the unrivalled rose and odiferous jessamine.

"I have been wandering over the deserted gardens, my lord," replied Manly; "and have gathered their choicest productions, in the hope you would not be tempted to encounter the oppressive heats yourself in quest of them."

Proofs of affection strike the imagination of languid indisposition with additional force; Roseville bent again over the flowers that strewed his morning repast, and thought them sweeter.

The disposition of men may be learned by the manners of those they hold in subjection; the amiable consideration and winning kindness of Roseville, even in the period when the caprice of wearied spirits and the influence of pain, presented excuses for captiousness and irritability, attached his domestics to his service.

Manly had an additional tie: when but a boy, Roseville, during a vacation at Harrow, had saved him from the river in which he incautiously plunged, and since, he had followed his preserver's steps with an affectionate gratitude, respect prompted him to evince,

more in silent deeds of service than words.

Roseville inherited a pulmonary complaint from his mother; and left in early life to the possession of considerable property, had been advised by his physicians to try the effects of a voyage to the Mediterranean.

During the continuance of the sirocco, Lord Roseville amused himself with viewing the house he occupied, and the few remains of ancient splendor the late possessors had left. The cielings, ornamented with light paintings, elevated above a pavement, composed of squares of marble, centered with Mosaic, were despoiled of their costly lamps. Through the palace, no vestige of furniture but some gilded massy chairs remained. A few broken statues and urns lay scattered near the steps of a court, latticed

round with gilded wires; here, Jacobi, an old Maltese, preserved the remains of a fine aviary. The fountain near gave coolness to the air, and enticed the birds to lave in its dashing stream. On the marble steps of a light portico, leading to the court, were placed immense vases of china, in which orange trees bore at once fruit and flower. Lord Roseville admired the apartment from which it led; and hither his servants brought the articles of light Maltese furniture they had provided. The adjoining apartment was that in which he slept; beyond, a door opened to a small oratory; the altar, crucifix, and shrine, were composed of black polished wood, resembling ebony, curiously carved; the pavement of dark marble, and high windows of stained glass, gave a sombre look to the chapel, from whence imagination shrunk. The altar had been de-

prived of every ornament of value, save a picture, which, fixed in a side pannel of the wainscot, could not have been easily removed. Lord Roseville gazed on it attentively, as Manly carefully removed the dust neglect had suffered to accumulate on its surface.

"It is the portrait of a lady, my lord," cried Manly, as the colours brightened;—"and a beautiful one!" thought Roseville. The dress, according to the Maltese costume, was black, with rich gold ornaments; a cross of the same precious metal, represented in one hand, whilst the other partly unveiled a countenance of lovely expression; large eyes, in whose fringed lids the loves ambushed, a complexion delicate as the unsullied jessamine, a mouth dimpled with smiles, were attractions on which the traveller gazed in admiration. Turning at length from the object of his me-

ditation, he was somewhat surprised at perceiving a stranger.

" It is, Jacobi, my lord," said Manly, " the Maltese servant, who, your lordship was apprised would remain in the palace."

Roseville accosting the venerable old man in Italian, found he offered his services to explain to him the subject of the pictures, ranged by his order in the adjacent apartment, where nearly a hundred portraits of large dimensions, inclosed in frames of massy gilding, were placed against the walls, and presented an assemblage of knights of St. John, grand masters, and churchmen. Roseville, as he read the names of Vignacourt, La Valetta, and L'Isle Adame, on the edges of the canvass, rejected the information Jacobi would have given; and stood in earnest contemplation of resemblances calling forth from time the

recollections of the heroes of St. Elmo's forted height, of Victoire, and of Rhodes. Three figures appeared in most of the designs; the knight, his page, and a child, sporting with the shield: they were representations of the same person at different periods of life; a mode customary with the painters of the Mediterranean.

Jacobi again advanced; the tear started to his eye as he pointed out his master, the last owner of the palace Floriane: "The Counts de Lia are descended from the marriage of the Viscount de Cicala with a beautiful Turkish captive," said the old man; "many knights have sprung from the race."

"Does the count live?" enquired Roseville.

Jacobi involuntarily placed his hand on the dagger of his girdle; his lip quivered, and his eye flushed revenge;

shortly recovering, a shade of sorrow succeeded, and, with faltering tones, he answered the enquiry.

" The count has fallen in defence of his faith against the apostate knights who basely sold Mileta: he was assassinated three days after the French became masters of Valetta; the general of the invading army entered Floriane; and since, Signor," said Jacobi, " it is ruined and desolate."

Roseville returned to the chapel; and pointing to the portrait it contained, enquired the name of the lovely lady for whom it had been designed.

" Portia de Lia," answered Jacobi; " she was the count's only child, and has not been heard of, Signor, since the murder of her father."

The horrors of war, and its attendant consequences, stole on the mind of Roseville; he sunk into a reverie, on awaken-

ing from which he perceived the Maltese had retired.

Manly now urged his lord to walk on the terraced roof of the palace, from whence the sea-breeze, on whose wing the noxious sirocco had flown, might be inhaled. The houses of Malta are flat, and decked with pots of flowers, lemon, and orange trees., Here the women pass the greater part of the day, under the shade of an awning, weaving ribbons and lace. Roseville, from the elevated roof of his lofty residence, looked down on every object of the surrounding prospect beneath him, with accuracy of gaze. Situated on the point of Floriane, his eye commanded the harbour of Valetta; the awful bastion of St. Elmo, projecting its base of rock into the ocean, monument of heroes met the waves recoiling from the opposite fortress of Ricasoli; nearer, on a projec-

tion of the land, stood Fort Angelo and Citta Vittoriosa, sacred to the remembrance of valour; here the fallen crescent humbled to the blood-stained water. The peninsula of La Sangle, and the point of the Coradis, raising its grove-embosomed edifice, closed the scene. To the left, the curving shores of Marsa Musceit, formed, with the opposite one of Valetta, a basin to the romantic island of the Lazaretto; the waves laving Fort Manual, gently proceeded to Fort Tigne, and passing Cape Dragout, flowed uninterruptedly into the Mediterranean waters. Over this expanse of prospect, stately edifices, built with free stone or marble of dazzling whiteness; time-worn towers, convents, vine-covered lattices, groves, and fortresses, richly scattered their varieties. Roseville did not retire from the contemplation of the scene till

evening closed in all the beauty of a sultry clime.

On descending, he found cards from most of the English resident in Malta; but resolved on declining their invitations till he had in part recovered the fatigue of his voyage, and surveyed the charming island of Mileta.

CHAPTER II.

" The faithful servant thinks of former days;
" Too loth to blame, yet hesitates to praise."

It was not without regret Jacobi assisted to roll out the count's carriage on the following day, for the accommodation of Lord Roseville. It was gilded, and highly adorned with curtains and tassels. Two fine mules harnessed, were guided by a stout Maltese, in trowsers and shirt of snowy whiteness, a broad girdle of red silk, and a cap of striped cotton.

The road to Citta Vecchia lies through a flat country, covered with buildings, built of polished stone, and adorned by

churches of architectural elegance, whose dazzling whiteness are contrasted by groves of cypress, aloes, and orange. Roseville only proceeded the distance of St. Antoine, formerly a residence of the grand master. The house presented no object of curiosity; but pacing the extent of a stone terrace, bordered by odoriferous flowers, and leaning on his faithful servant, he advanced to the gardens. Alleys of orange trees, terminating in regular fountains, presented an uniformity unpleasing to the eye of taste. A broken arch, composed of rocks and shells, through whose chasms the water gushed, attracted more the attention, and thither Roseville proceeded. Seating himself near the cooling dash of the cascade, he amused himself with the gold fish of an adjoining reservoir, into which the waters of the arch emptied themselves. Some time passed in this

employment, when his attention was engaged by two ladies, who, advancing near the spot, gave him an opportunity of viewing them. In the features of the one nearest, he perceived nothing beyond the usual class of countenance; the other, though of form attractively beautiful, kept her face so sedulously covered, that Roseville, however anxious to behold a specimen of Maltese beauty, was forced to suspend his curiosity. Frequently, in their rambles through the gardens, the party crossed each other; and once he heard the unveiled lady observe to her companion, that the chevalier they met, dwelt in the palace Floriane. Somewhat surprised, he resolved to accost them; and when the fair friends again crossed his path, offered with respectful gallantry, some delicious oranges his servant had gathered. The ladies accepted the offering, and

seated themselves under the trees. Roseville, entering into conversation, found they spoke Italian in the purity that is only known to the higher classes of Maltese; their expressions were chosen with elegance, and they neither shrunk from his attentions with the *mauvaise honte* of low breeding, or received them with indecorous boldness. Roseville fancied the expressions of the veiled incognita replete with the polish of education, and the sensibility of feeling the discourse was calculated to call forth. Roseville spoke of the former deeds of the Maltese, and the distresses which the rapacious cruelty of their late conquerors had inflicted. The veiled female sighed deeply as she spoke, and shortly with her companion took leave.

Roseville had nearly forgot his adventure by the time of his return home,

where after a light repast, he shortly retired to his apartment.

The weather was uncommonly sultry, and the communicating doors of each room were thrown open for the admission of air; the foot of Roseville's bed faced the entrance of the small chapel, over whose dark pavement the moon shed her fullest refulgence. His eye unconsciously penetrated the recess, and took in each sombre object of its shrine. Wearied at length, his lids gently closed, and he was preparing to resign himself to repose, when a gentle murmur recalled thought:---starting up, and leaning on his elbow, he beheld with amazement a shadowy figure glide athwart the gloom of the chapel. It returned, and kneeling before the altar, seemed to pray with fervency. Roseville gently touched the head of his sleeping domestic, and pointed to the

chapel:---thither both rushed; all around was silent and deserted; Manly gazed on Roseville!---no other door opened to the chapel, but that of his master's apartment; and the bare walls and disrobed sanctuary could give no concealment. In silent expectation the night passed; but when morning gave Roseville an opportunity of again inspecting the oratory, the impossibility of any object effecting its escape appeared so evident, that he remained not in doubt of his having suffered himself to be deluded by an illusion of the imagination, and that his domestic had partaken of his weakness.

The gardens of Floriane, though no hand but Jacobi's cultivated them, or pruned their wild luxuriance of fruit and flower, often afforded hours of exercise and amusement to the invalid. One day passing near their vined bowers,

he was struck with the appearance of a paper. Lifting it from the ground, on which it lay, he read these lines, written in a neat hand and pure Italian:

"Your nation is a generous one; and something persuades me the secrets of a female, if entrusted to your care, would be considered as sacred:--I only hesitate to disclose myself, till I shall be assured of this."

Roseville read the paper over repeatedly with attention:---curiosity, and a belief that it might be the incognita of St. Antoine that addressed him, operated against the reason that whispered such adventures were common to Englishmen; and that by pursuing the purport of the billet he might entangle himself in one of those intrigues in which fortune and character are often wrecked.

Hastily pencilling in his book these lines, he deposited them on the spot

where he had found the billet, thus answered.

"If you are a female of honour, and unfortunate, have no hesitation in confiding to me any difficulty it may be in my power to redress."

Roseville diverted the anxiety he felt by visiting the church of St. John, once rich with the gifts of crowned heads. Treading with awe the pavement, whose sepulchral stones were inlaid with marbles in exquisite Mosaic, he contemplated the inscription, marking the deeds of heroism, where wreaths of agate, jasper, and cornelian twined round the hero's name.

At the extremity of the church, a statue of the Saviour baptizing by St. John, in white marble, is raised before the altar. On every side the gilding of the pillars, the decoration of the chapels (despoiled as they had been by

the hands of sacrilegious rapine) and the grandeur of the building, impressed Roseville with sentiments of respectful veneration. The different events in the life of the tutelary saint, painted by Matthias Preti, though coloured in sombre shades, over which time has thrown a still darker covering, have excellence, that escaped not the eye of the connoisseur:---a Maltese boy followed Lord Roseville, as he traversed the lofty aisles, enumerating the riches taken by the merciless invaders.

"Our golden lamp and its costly chain, Signori:——"

"But your relics were respected," said Roseville; "the hand of St. John remains."

The boy crossed himself with thankfulness; and Roseville perceiving the lady he had met at St. Antoine, dis-

missed him, and walked towards her, as she slowly advanced.

Her first words removed uncertainty from his mind :---" I give you this narrative of my unfortunate friend," said she, presenting a packet; " assured though we cast ourselves on the honour of a stranger, he will feel for our distresses."

Lord Roseville, taking the papers from her hand, assured her of every aid in his power to bestow; and hastily leaving the church as strangers entered, sought the elucidation of the mystery in the retirement of his home.

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